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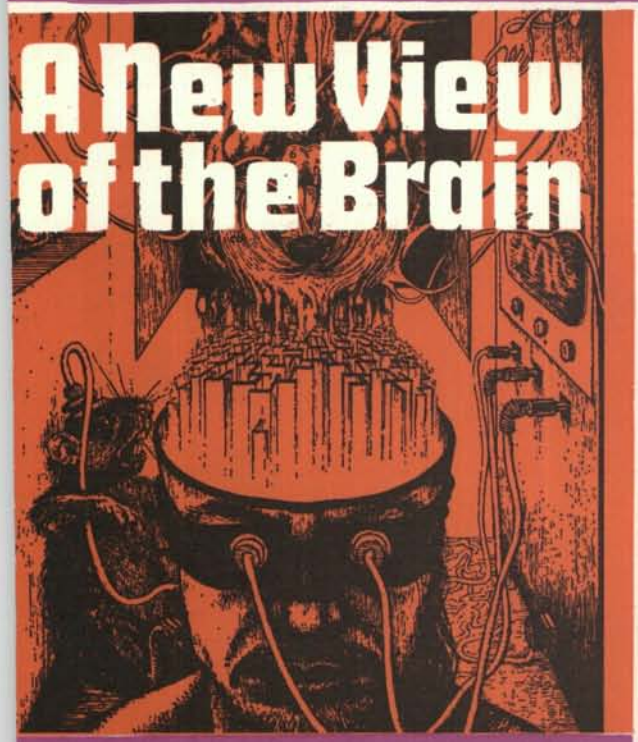

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Malcolm Bradbury

An Experience of India (a story)

R Prawer Jhabvala

Gordon Rattray Taylor

Mishima's Way
D J Enright

Mauriac
Martin Turnell

Hemingway
Paul Theroux

A World at Peace
Louis J Halle

A Visit to Lévi-Strauss
John Weightman

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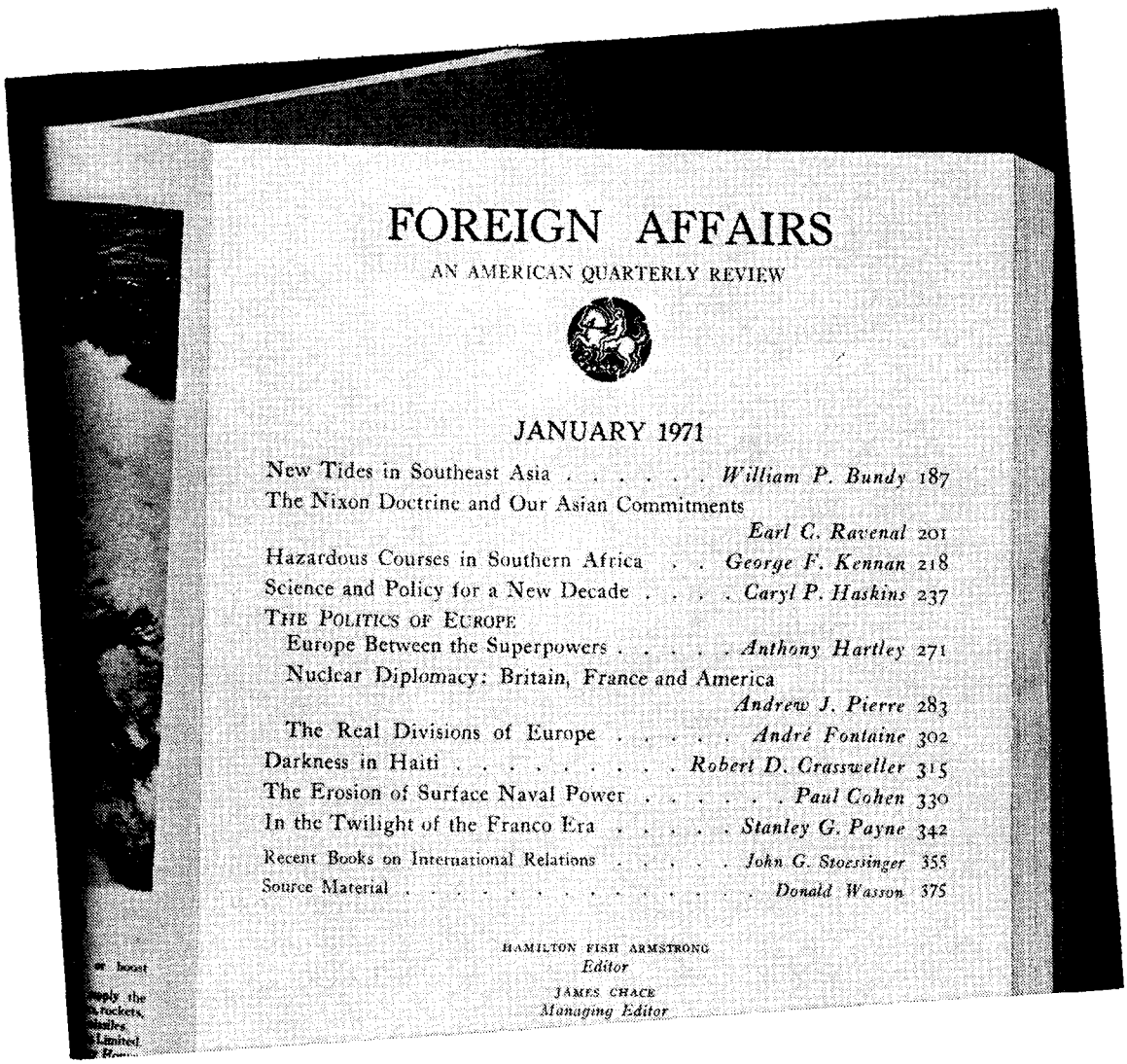
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R. Prawer Jhabvala

An Experience of India

TODAY Ramu left. He came to ask for money and I gave him as much as I could. He counted it and asked for more, but I didn't have it to give him. He said some insulting things, which I pretended not to hear. Really I couldn't blame him, I knew he was anxious and afraid, not having another job to go to. But I also couldn't help contrasting the way he spoke now with what he had been like in the past: so polite always, and eager to please, and always smiling, saying "Yes sir," "Yes madam please." He used to look very different too, very spruce in his white uniform and his white canvas shoes. When guests came, he put on a special white coat he had made us buy him. He was always happy when there were guests—serving, mixing drinks, emptying ashtrays—and I think he was disappointed that more didn't come. The Ford Foundation people next door had a round of buffet suppers and Sunday brunches, and perhaps Ramu suffered in status before their servants because we didn't have much of that. Actually, coming to think of it, perhaps he suffered in status anyhow because we weren't like the others. I mean, I wasn't. I didn't look like a proper *memsahib* or dress like one—I wore Indian clothes right from the start—or ever behaved like one. I think perhaps Ramu didn't care for that. I think servants want their employers to be conventional and put up a good front so that other people's servants can respect them. Some of the nasty things Ramu told me this morning were about how everyone said I was just someone from a very low sweeper caste in my own country and how sorry they were for him that he should have to serve such a person.

He also said it was no wonder Sahib had run away from me. Henry didn't actually run away, but it's true that things had changed between us. I suppose India made us see how fundamentally different we were from each other. Though when we first came, we both came we thought with the same ideas. We were both happy that Henry's paper had sent him out to India. We both thought it was a marvellous opportunity not only for him professionally but for both of us spiritually. Here was our escape from that Western materialism with which we were both so terribly fed up. But once he got here and the first enthusiasm had worn off, Henry seemed not to mind going back to just the sort of life we'd run away from. He even didn't seem to care about meeting Indians any more, though in the beginning he had made a great point of doing so; now it seemed to him all right to go only to parties given by other foreign correspondents and sit around there and eat and drink and talk just the way they would at home. After a while, I couldn't stand going with him any more, so we'd have a fight and then he'd go off by himself. That was a relief. I didn't want to be with any of those people and talk about inane things in their tastefully appointed air-conditioned apartments.

I HAD COME to India to *be* in India. I wanted to be changed. Henry didn't—he wanted a change, that's all, but not to be changed. After a while because of that he was a stranger to me and I felt I was alone, the way I'm really alone now. Henry had to travel a lot round the country to write his pieces, and in the beginning I used to go

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with him. But I didn't like the way he travelled, always by plane and staying in expensive hotels and drinking in the bar with the other correspondents. So I would leave him and go off by myself. I travelled the way everyone travels in India, just with a bundle and a roll of bedding which I could spread out anywhere and go to sleep. I went in third-class railway carriages and in those old lumbering buses that go from one small dusty town to another and are loaded with too many people inside and with too much scruffy baggage on top. At the end of my journeys, I emerged soaked in perspiration, soot, and dirt. I ate anything anywhere and always like everyone else with my fingers (I became good at that)—thick, half-raw *chapattis* from wayside stalls and little messes of lentils and vegetables served on a leaf, all the food the poor eat; sometimes if I didn't have anything, other people would share with me from out of their bundles. Henry, who had the usual phobia about bugs, said I would kill myself eating that way. But nothing ever happened. Once, in a desert fort in Rajasthan, I got very thirsty and asked the old caretaker to pull some water out of an ancient disused well for me. It was brown and sort of foul-smelling, and maybe there was a corpse in the well, who knew. But I was thirsty so I drank it, and still nothing happened.

PEOPLE ALWAYS SPEAK to you in India, in buses and trains and on the streets, they want to know all about you and ask you a lot of personal questions. I didn't speak much Hindi, but somehow we always managed, and I didn't mind answering all those questions when I could. Women quite often used to touch me, run their hands over my skin just to feel what it was like I suppose, and they specially liked to touch my hair which is long and blonde. Sometimes I had several of them lifting up strands of it at the same time, one pulling this way and another that way and they would exchange excited comments and laugh and scream a lot; but in a nice way, so I couldn't help but laugh and scream with them. And people in India are so hospitable. They're always saying "Please come and stay in my house," perfect strangers that happen to be sitting near you on the train. Sometimes, if I didn't have any plans or if it sounded as if they might be living in an interesting place, I'd say "all right thanks," and I'd go along with them. I had some interesting adventures that way.

I might as well say straight off that many of these adventures were sexual. Indian men are very, very keen to sleep with foreign girls. Of course men in other countries are also keen to sleep with girls, but there's something specially frenzied about Indian men when they approach you. Frenzied and at the same time shy. You'd think that with all those ancient traditions they have—like the Kama Sutra and the sculptures showing couples in every kind of position—you'd think with all that behind them they'd be very highly skilled, but they're not. Just the opposite. Middle-aged men get as excited as a fifteen-year-old boy, and then of course they can't wait, they *jump* and before you know where you are, in a great rush, it's all over. And when it's over, it's over, there's nothing left. Then they're only concerned with getting away as soon as possible before anyone can find them out (they're always scared of being found out). There's no tenderness, no interest at all in the other person as a person; only the same kind of curiosity that there is on the buses and the same sort of questions are asked, like are you married, any children, why no children, do you like wearing our Indian dress. . . . There's one question though that's not asked on the buses but that always inevitably comes up during sex, so that you learn to wait for it: always, at the moment of mounting excitement, they ask "How many men have you slept with?" and it's repeated over and over *"How many? How many?"* and then they shout *"Aren't you ashamed?"* and *"Bitch!"*—always that one word which seems to excite them more than any other, to call you that is the height of their love-making, it's the last frenzy, the final outrage: "*Bitch*!" Sometimes I couldn't stop myself but had to burst out laughing.

I DIDN'T LIKE sleeping with all these people, but I felt I had to. I felt I was doing good, though I didn't know why, I couldn't explain it to myself. Only one of all those men ever spoke to me: I mean the way

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people having sex together are supposed to speak, coming near each other not only physically but also wanting to show each other what's deep inside them. He was a middle-aged man, a fellow-passenger on a bus, and we got talking at one of the stops the bus made at a wayside tea-stall. When he found out I was on my way to *X*— and didn't have anywhere to stay, he said, as so many have said before him, "Please come and stay in my house." And I said, as I had often said before, "All right." Only when we got there he didn't take me to his house but to a hotel. It was a very poky place in the bazaar and we had to grope our way up a steep smelly stone staircase and then there was a tiny room with just one string-cot and an earthenware water-jug in it. He made a joke about there being only one bed. I was too tired to care much about anything, I only wanted to get it over with quickly and go to sleep. But afterwards I found it wasn't possible to go to sleep because there was a lot of noise coming up from the street where all the shops were still open though it was nearly midnight. People seemed to be having a good time and there was even a phonograph playing some cracked old love-song. My companion also couldn't get to sleep; he left the bed and sat down on the floor by the window and smoked one cigarette after the other. His face was lit up by the light coming in from the street outside and I saw he was looking sort of thoughtful and sad, sitting there smoking. He had rather a good face, strong bones but quite a feminine mouth and of course those feminine suffering eyes that most Indians have.

I went and sat next to him. The window was an arch reaching down to the floor so that I could see out into the bazaar. It was quite gay down there with all the lights; the phonograph was playing from the cold-drink shop and a lot of people were standing around there having highly-coloured pop-drinks out of bottles; next to it was a shop with pink and blue brassieres strung up on a pole. On top of the shops were wrought-iron balconies on which sat girls dressed up in tatty georgette and waving peacock fans to keep themselves cool. Sometimes men looked up to talk and laugh with them and they talked and laughed back. I realised we were in the brothel area; probably the hotel we were in was a brothel too.

I asked, "Why did you bring me here?"

He answered, "Why did you come?"

That was a good question. He was right. But I wasn't sorry I came. Why should I be? I said, "It's all right. I like it."

He said "She likes it" and he laughed. A bit later he started talking: about how he had just been to visit his daughter who had been married a few months before. She wasn't happy in her in-laws' house, and when he said goodbye to her she clung to him and begged him to take her home. The more he reasoned with her, the more she cried, the more she clung to him. In the end he had had to use force to free himself from her so that he could get away and not miss his bus. He felt very sorry for her, but what else was there for him to do. If he took her away, her in-laws might refuse to have her back again and then her life would be ruined. And she would get used to it, they always did; for some it took longer and was harder, but they all got used to it in the end. His wife, too, had cried a lot during the first year of marriage.

I asked him whether he thought it was good to arrange marriages that way, and he looked at me and asked how else would you do it. I said something about love and it made him laugh and he said that was only for the films. I didn't want to defend my point of view; in fact, I felt rather childish and as if he knew a lot more about things than I did. He began to get amorous again, and this time it was much better because he wasn't so frenzied and I liked him better by now too. Afterwards he told me how when he was first married, he and his wife had shared a room with the whole family (parents and younger brothers and sisters), and whatever they wanted to do, they had to do very quickly and quietly for fear of anyone waking up. I had a strange sensation then, as if I wanted to strip off all my clothes and parade up and down the room naked. I thought of all the men's eyes that follow one in the street, and for the first time it struck me that the expression in them was like that in the eyes of prisoners looking through their bars at the world outside; and then I thought maybe I'm that world outside for them—the way I go here and there

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and talk and laugh with everyone and do what I like—maybe I'm the river and trees they can't have where they are. Oh, I felt so sorry, I wanted to do so much. And to make a start, I flung myself on my companion and kissed and hugged him hard, I lay on top of him, I smothered him, I spread my hair over his face because I wanted to make him forget everything that wasn't me —this room, his daughter, his wife, the women in georgette sitting on the balconies —I wanted everything to be new for him and as beautiful as I could make it. He liked it for a while but got tired quite quickly, probably because he wasn't all that young any more.

IT WAS SHORTLY AFTER this encounter that I met Ahmed. He was eighteen years old and a musician. His family had been musicians as long as anyone could remember and the alley they lived in was full of other musicians, so that when you walked down it, it was like walking through a magic forest all lit up with music and sounds. Only there wasn't anything magic about the place itself which was very cramped and dirty; the houses were so old that, whenever there were heavy rains, one or two of them came tumbling down. I was never inside Ahmed's house or met his family—they'd have died of shock if they had got to know about me—but I knew they were very poor and scraped a living by playing at weddings and functions. Ahmed never had any money, just sometimes if he was lucky he had a few coins to buy his betel with. But he was cheerful and happy and enjoyed everything that came his way. He was married but his wife was too young to stay with him and after the ceremony she had been sent back to live with her father who was a musician in another town.

When I first met Ahmed, I was staying in a hostel attached to a temple which was free of charge for pilgrims; but afterwards he and I wanted a place for us to go to, so I wired Henry to send me some more money. Henry sent me the money, together with a long complaining letter which I didn't read all the way through, and I took a room in a hotel. It was on the outskirts of town which was mostly waste land except for a few houses and some of these had never been finished. Our hotel wasn't finished either because the proprietor had run out of money, and now it probably never would be for the place had turned out to be a poor proposition, it was too far out of town and no one ever came to stay there. But it suited us fine. We had this one room, painted bright pink and quite bare except for two pieces of furnitute—a bed and a dressing-table, both of them very shiny and new. Ahmed loved it, he had never stayed in such a grand room before; he bounced up and down on the bed which had a mattress and stood looking at himself from all sides in the mirror of the dressing-table.

I never in all my life was so gay with anyone the way I was with Ahmed. I'm not saying I never had a good time at home; I did. I had a lot of friends before I married Henry and we had parties and danced and drank and I enjoyed it. But it wasn't like with Ahmed because no one was ever as *carefree* as he was, as light and easy and just ready to play and live. At home we always had our problems, personal ones of course, but on top of those there were universal problems—social, and economic, and moral, we really cared about what was happening in the world around us and in our own minds, we felt a responsibility towards being here alive at this point in time and wanted to do our best. Ahmed had no thoughts like that at all; there wasn't a shadow on him. He had his personal problems from time to time, and when he had them, he was very downcast and sometimes he even cried. But they weren't anything really very serious—usually some family quarrel, or his father was angry with him—and they passed away, blew away like a breeze over a lake and left him sunny and sparkling again. He enjoyed everything so much: not only our room, and the bed and the dressing-table, and making love, but so many other things like drinking coca-cola and spraying scent and combing my hair and my combing his; and he made up games for us to play like indoor cricket with a slipper for a bat and one of Henry's letters rolled up for a ball. He taught me how to crack his toes, which is such a great Indian delicacy, and yelled with pleasure when I got it right; but when he did it to

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me, I yelled with pain so he stopped at once and was terribly sorry. He was very considerate and tender. No one I've ever known was as sensitive to my feelings as he was. It was like an instinct with him, as if he could feel right down into my heart and know what was going on there; and without ever having to ask anything or my ever having to explain anything, he could sense each change of mood and adapt himself to it and feel with it. Henry would always have to ask me "Now what's up? What's the matter with you?" and when we were still all right with each other, he would make a sincere effort to understand. But Ahmed never had to make an effort, and maybe if he'd had to he wouldn't have succeeded because it wasn't ever with his mind that he understood anything, it was always with his feelings. Perhaps that was so because he was a musician and in music everything is beyond words and explanations anyway; and from what he told me about Indian music, I could see it was very, very subtle, there are effects that you can hardly perceive they're so subtle and your sensibilities have to be kept tuned all the time to the finest, finest point; and perhaps because of that the whole of Ahmed was always at that point and he could play me and listen to me as if I were his sarod.

AFTER SOME TIME we ran out of money and Henry wouldn't send any more, so we had to think what to do. I certainly couldn't bear to part with Ahmed, and in the end I suggested he'd better come back to Delhi with me and we'd try and straighten things out with Henry. Ahmed was terribly excited by the idea; he'd never been to Delhi and was wild to go. Only it meant he had to run away from home because his family would never have allowed him to go, so one night he stole out of the house with his sarod and his little bundle of clothes and met me at the railway station. We reached Delhi the next night, tired and dirty and covered with soot the way you always get in trains here. When we arrived home, Henry was giving a party; not a big party, just a small informal group sitting around chatting. I'll never forget the expression on everyone's faces when Ahmed and I came staggering in with our bundles and bedding. My blouse had got torn in the train all the way down the side, and I didn't have a safety-pin so it kept flapping open and unfortunately I didn't have anything underneath. Henry's guests were all looking very nice, the men in smart bush-shirts and their wives in little silk cocktail dresses; and although after the first shock they all behaved very well and carried on as if nothing unusual had happened, still it was an awkward situation for everyone concerned.

AHMED NEVER really got over it. I can see now how awful it must have been for him, coming into that room full of strange white people and all of them turning round to stare at us. And the room itself must have been a shock to him, he can never have seen anything like it. Actually, it was quite a shock to me too. I'd forgotten that that was the way Henry and I lived. When we first came, we had gone to a lot of trouble doing up the apartment, buying furniture and pictures and stuff, and had succeeded in making it look just like the apartment we have at home except for some elegant Indian touches. To Ahmed it was all very strange. He stayed there with us for some time, and he couldn't get used to it. I think it bothered him to have so many *things* around, rugs and lamps and *objets d'art;* he couldn't see why they had to be there. Now that I had travelled and lived the way I had, I couldn't see why either; as a matter of fact I felt as if these things were a hindrance and cluttered up not only your room but your mind and your soul as well, hanging on them like weights.

We had some quite bad scenes in the apartment during those days. I told Henry that I was in love with Ahmed, and naturally that upset him, though what upset him most was the fact that he had to keep us both in the apartment. I also realised that this was an undesirable situation, but I couldn't see any way out of it because where else could Ahmed and I go? We didn't have any money, only Henry had so we had to stay with him. He kept saying that he would turn both of us out into the streets but I knew he wouldn't. He wasn't the type to do a violent thing like that, and besides he him-

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self was so frightened of the streets that he'd have died to think of anyone connected with him being out there. I wouldn't have minded all that much if he *had* turned us out: it was warm enough to sleep in the open and people always give you food if you don't have any. I would have preferred it really because it was so unpleasant with Henry; but I knew Ahmed would never have been able to stand it. He was quite a pampered boy, and though his family were poor, they looked after and protected each other very carefully; he never had to miss a meal or go dressed in anything but fine muslin clothes, nicely washed and starched by female relatives.

Ahmed bitterly repented having come. He was very miserable, feeling so uncomfortable in the apartment and with Henry making rows all the time. Ramu, the servant, didn't improve anything by the way he behaved, absolutely refusing to serve Ahmed and never losing an opportunity to make him feel inferior. Everything went out of Ahmed; he crumpled up as if he were a paper flower. He didn't want to play his sarod and he didn't want to make love to me, he just sat around with his head and his hands hanging down and there were times when I saw tears rolling down his face and he didn't even bother to wipe them off. Although he was so unhappy in the apartment, he never left it and so he never saw any of the places he had been so eager to come to Delhi for, like the Juma Masjid and Nizamuddin's tomb. Most of the time he was thinking about his family. He wrote long letters to them in Urdu, which I posted, telling them where he was and imploring their pardon for running away; and long letters came back again and he read and read them, soaking them in tears and kisses. One night he got so bad he jumped out of bed and, rushing into Henry's bedroom, fell to his knees by the side of Henry's bed and begged to be sent back home again. And Henry, sitting up in bed in his pyjamas, said all right, in rather a lordly way I thought. So next day I took Ahmed to the station and put him on the train, and through the bars of the railway carriage he kissed my hands and looked into my eyes with all his old ardour and tenderness, so at the last moment I wanted to go with him but it was too late and the train pulled away out of the station and all that was left to me of Ahmed was a memory, very beautiful and delicate like a flavour or a perfume or one of those melodies he played on his sarod.

I BECAME very depressed. I didn't feel like going travelling any more but stayed home with Henry and went with him to his diplomatic and other parties. He was quite glad to have me go with him again; he liked having someone in the car on the way home to talk to about all the people who'd been at the party and compare their chances of future success with his own. I didn't mind going with him, there wasn't anything else I wanted to do. I felt as if I'd failed at something. It wasn't only Ahmed. I didn't really miss him all that much and was glad to think of him back with his family in that alley full of music where he was happy. For myself I didn't know what to do next though I felt that something still awaited me. Our apartment led to an open terrace and I often went up there to look at the view which was marvellous. The house we lived in and all the ones around were white and pink and very modern, with picture windows and little lawns in front, but from up here you could look beyond them to the city and the big mosque and the fort. In between there were stretches of waste land, empty and barren except for an occasional crumbly old tomb growing there. What always impressed me the most was the sky because it was so immensely big and so unchanging in colour, and it made everything underneath it—all the buildings, even the great fort, the whole city, not to speak of all the people living in it—seem terribly small and trivial and passing somehow. But at the same time that it made me feel small, it also made me feel immense and eternal. I don't know, I can't explain, perhaps because it was itself like that and this thought—that there *was* something like that—made me feel that I had a part in it, I too was part of being immense and eternal. It was all very vague really and nothing I could ever speak about to anyone; but because of it I thought well maybe there is something more for me here after all. That was a relief because it meant I wouldn't have to go

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home and be the way I was before and nothing different or gained. For all the time, ever since I'd come and even before, I'd had this idea that there was something in India for me to *gain*, and even though for the time being I'd failed, I could try longer and at last perhaps I'd succeed.

I'd met people on and off who had come here on a spiritual quest, but it wasn't the sort of thing I wanted for myself. I thought anything I wanted to find, I could find by myself travelling round the way I had done. But now that this had failed, I became interested in the other thing. I began to go to a few prayer-meetings and I liked the atmosphere very much. The meeting was usually conducted by a *swami* in a saffron robe who had renounced the world, and he gave an address about love and God and everyone sang hymns also about love and God. The people who came to these meetings were mostly middle-aged and quite poor. I had already met many like them on my travels, for they were the sort of people who sat waiting on station platforms and bus depots, absolutely patient and uncomplaining even when conductors and other officials pushed them around. They were gentle people and very clean though there was always some slight smell about them as of people who find it difficult to keep clean because they live in crowded and unsanitary places where there isn't much running water and the drainage system isn't good. I loved the expression that came into their faces when they sang hymns. I wanted to be like them, so I began to dress in plain white saris and I tied up my hair in a plain knot and the only ornament I wore was a string of beads not for decoration but to say the names of God on. I became a vegetarian and did my best to cast out all the undesirable human passions, such as anger and lust. When Henry was in an irritable or quarrelsome mood, I never answered him back but was very kind and patient with him. However, far from having a good effect, this seemed to make him worse. Altogether he didn't like the new personality I was trying to achieve but sneered a lot at the way I dressed and looked and the simple food I ate. Actually, I didn't enjoy this food very much and found it quite a trial eating nothing but boiled rice and lentils with him sitting opposite me having his cutlets and chops.

THE PEACE AND SATISFACTION that I saw on the faces of the other hymn-singers didn't come to me. As a matter of fact, I grew rather bored. There didn't seem much to be learned from singing hymns and eating vegetables. Fortunately just about this time someone took me to see a holy woman who lived on the roof of an old overcrowded house near the river. People treated her like a holy woman but she didn't set up to be one. She didn't set up to be anything really, but only stayed in her room on the roof and talked to people who came to see her. She liked telling stories and she could hold everyone spell-bound listening to her, even though she was only telling the old mythological stories they had known all their lives long, about Krishna, and the Pandavas, and Rama and Sita. But she got terribly excited while she was telling them, as if it wasn't something that had happened or maybe not happened millions of years ago but as if it was all real and going on exactly now. Once she was telling about Krishna's mother who made him open his mouth to see whether he had stolen and was eating up her butter. What did she see then, inside his mouth?

"Worlds!" the holy woman cried. "Not just this world, not just one world with its mountains and rivers and seas, no, but world upon world, all spinning in one great eternal cycle in this child's mouth, moon upon moon, sun upon sun!"

She clapped her hands and laughed and laughed, and then she burst out singing in her thin old voice, some hymn all about how great God was and how lucky for her that she was his beloved. She was dancing with joy in front of all the people. And she was just a little shrivelled old woman, very ugly with her teeth gone and a growth on her chin: but the way she carried on it was as if she had all the looks and glamour anyone ever had in the world and was in love a million times over. I thought well whatever it was she had, obviously it was the one thing worth having and I had better try for it.

I went to stay with a *guru* in a holy city. He had a house on the river in which he lived with his disciples. They lived in a

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nice way: they meditated a lot and went out for boat rides on the river and in the evenings they all sat around in the *guru*'s room and had a good time. There were quite a few foreigners among the disciples, and it was the *guru*'s greatest wish to go abroad and spread his message there and bring back more disciples. When he heard that Henry was a journalist he became specially interested in me. He talked to me about the importance of introducing the leaven of Indian spirituality into the lump of Western materialism. To achieve this end, his own presence in the West was urgently required, and to ensure the widest dissemination of his message he would also need the full support of the mass media. He said that since we live in the modern age, we must avail ourselves of all its resources. He was very keen for me to bring Henry into the *ashram*, and when I was vague in my answers—I certainly didn't want Henry here nor would he in the least want to come—he became very pressing and even quite annoyed and kept returning to the subject.

He didn't seem a very spiritual type of person to me. He was a hefty man with big shoulders and a big head. He wore his hair long but his jaw was clean-shaven and stuck out very large and prominent and gave him a powerful look like a bull. All he ever wore was a saffron robe and this left a good part of his body bare so that it could be seen at once how strong his legs and shoulders were. He had huge eyes which he used constantly and apparently to tremendous effect, fixing people with them and penetrating them with a steady beam. He used them on me when he wanted me to get Henry to come, but they never did anything to me. But the other disciples were very strongly affected by them. There was one girl, Jean, who said they were like the sun, so strong that if she tried to look back at them something terrible would happen to her like being blinded or burned up completely.

JEAN HAD MADE HERSELF everything an Indian *guru* expects his disciples to be. She was absolutely humble and submissive. She touched the *guru*'s feet when she came into or went out of his presence, she ran eagerly on any errand he sent her on. She said she gloried in being nothing in herself and living only by his will. And she looked like nothing too, sort of drained of everything she might once have been. At home her cheeks were probably pink but now she was quite white, waxen, and her hair too was completely faded and colourless. She always wore a plain white cotton sari and that made her look paler than ever, and thinner too, it seemed to bring out the fact that she had no hips and was utterly flat-chested. But she was happy—at least she said she was—she said she had never known such happiness and hadn't thought it was possible for human beings to feel like that. And when she said that, there was a sort of sparkle in her pale eyes, and at such moments I envied her because she seemed to have found what I was looking for. But at the same time I wondered whether she really had found what she thought she had, or whether it wasn't something else and she was cheating herself, and one day she'd wake up to that fact and then she'd feel terrible.

She was shocked by my attitude to the *guru*—not touching his feet or anything, and talking back to him as if he were just an ordinary person. Sometimes I thought perhaps there was something wrong with me because everyone else, all the other disciples and people from outside too who came to see him, they all treated him with this great reverence and their faces lit up in his presence as if there really was something special. Only I couldn't see it. But all the same I was quite happy there—not because of him, but because I liked the atmosphere of the place and the way they all lived. Everyone seemed very contented and as if they were living for something high and beautiful. I thought perhaps if I waited and was patient, I'd also come to be like that. I tried to meditate the way they all did, sitting crosslegged in one spot and concentrating on the holy word that had been given to me. I wasn't ever very successful and kept thinking of other things. But there were times when I went up to sit on the roof and looked out over the river, the way it stretched so calm and broad to the opposite bank and the boats going up and down it and the light changing and being reflected back on the water: and then, though I wasn't trying

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to meditate or come to any higher thoughts, I did feel very peaceful and was glad to be there.

The *guru* was patient with me for a long time, explaining about the importance of his mission and how Henry ought to come here and write about it for his paper. But as the days passed and Henry didn't show up, his attitude changed and he began to ask me questions. Why hadn't Henry come? Hadn't I written to him? Wasn't I going to write to him? Didn't I think what was being done in the *ashram* would interest him? Didn't I agree that it deserved to be brought to the notice of the world and that to this end no stone should be left unturned? While he said all this, he fixed me with his great eyes and I squirmed—not because of the way he was looking at me, but because I was embarrassed and didn't know what to answer. Then he became very gentle and said never mind, he didn't want to force me, that was not his way, he wanted people slowly to turn towards him of their own accord, to open up to him as a flower opens up and unfurls its petals and its leaves to the sun. But next day he would start again, asking the same questions, urging me, forcing me, and when this had gone on for some time and we weren't getting anywhere, he even got angry once or twice and shouted at me that I was obstinate and closed and had fenced in my heart with seven hoops of iron. When he shouted, everyone in the *ashram* trembled and afterwards they looked at me in a strange way. But an hour later the *guru* always had me called back to his room and then he was very gentle with me again and made me sit near him and insisted that it should be I who handed him his glass of milk in preference to one of the others all of whom were a lot keener to be selected for this honour than I was.

JEAN OFTEN CAME to talk to me. At night I spread my bedding in a tiny cubby-hole which was a disused store-room, and just as I was falling asleep, she would come in and lie down beside me and talk to me very softly and intimately. I didn't like it much, to have her so close to me and whispering in a voice that wasn't more than a breath and which I could feel, slightly warm, on my neck; sometimes she touched me, putting her hand on mine ever so gently so that she hardly was touching me but all the same I could feel that her hand was a bit moist and it gave me an unpleasant sensation down my spine. She spoke about the beauty of surrender, of not having a will and not having thoughts of your own. She said she too had been like me once, stubborn and ego-centred, but now she had learned the joy of yielding, and if she could only give me some inkling of the infinite bliss to be tasted in this process—here her breath would give out for a moment and she couldn't speak for ecstasy. I would take the opportunity to pretend to fall asleep, even snoring a bit to make it more convincing; after calling my name a few times in the hope of waking me up again she crept away disappointed. But next night she'd be back again, and during the day too she would attach herself to me as much as possible and continue talking in the same way.

It got so that even when she wasn't there, I could still hear her voice and feel her breath on my neck. I no longer enjoyed anything, not even going on the river or looking out over it from the top of the house. Although they hadn't bothered me before, I kept thinking of the funeral pyres burning on the bank, and it seemed to me that the smoke they gave out was spreading all over the sky and the river and covering them with a dirty yellowish haze. I realised that nothing good could come to me from this place now. But when I told the *guru* that I was leaving, he got into a great fury. His head and neck swelled out and his eyes became two coal-black demons rolling around in rage. In a voice like drums and cymbals, he *forbade* me to go. I didn't say anything but I made up my mind to leave next morning. I went to pack my things. The whole *ashram* was silent and stricken, no one dared speak. No one dared come near me either till late at night when Jean came as usual to lie next to me. She lay there completely still and crying to herself. I didn't know she was crying at first because she didn't make a sound but slowly her tears seeped into her side of the pillow and a sensation of dampness came creeping over to my side of it. I pretended not to notice anything.

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SUDDENLY the *guru* stood in the doorway. The room faced an open courtyard and this was full of moonlight which illumined him and made him look enormous and eerie. Jean and I sat up. I felt scared, my heart beat fast. After looking at us in silence for a while he ordered Jean to go away. She got up to do so at once. I said "No, stay," and clung to her hand but she disengaged herself from me and, touching the *guru*'s feet in reverence, she went away. She seemed to dissolve in the moonlight outside, leaving no trace. The *guru* sat beside me on my bedding spread on the floor. He said I was under a delusion, that I didn't really want to leave; my inmost nature was craving to stay by him—he knew, he could hear it calling out to him. But because I was afraid, I was attempting to smother this craving and to run away. "Look how you're trembling," he said. "See how afraid you are." It was true, I was trembling and cowering against the wall as far away from him as I could get. Only it was impossible to get very far because he was so huge and seemed to spread and fill the tiny closet. I could feel him close against me, and his pungent male smell, spiced with garlic, overpowered me.

"You're right to be afraid," he said: because it was his intention, he said, to batter and beat me, to smash my ego till it broke and flew apart into a million pieces and was scattered into the dust. Yes, it would be a painful process and I would often cry out and plead for mercy, but in the end —ah, with what joy I would step out of the prison of my own self, remade and reborn! I would fling myself to the ground and bathe his feet in tears of gratitude. Then I would be truly his. As he spoke I became more and more afraid because I felt, so huge and close and strong he was, that perhaps he really had the power to do to me all that he said and that in the end he would make me like Jean.

I now lay completely flattened against the wall, and he had moved up and was squashing me against it. One great hand travelled up and down my stomach, but its activity seemed apart from the rest of him and from what he was saying. His voice became lower and lower, more and more intense. He said he would teach me to obey, to submit myself completely, that would be the first step and a very necessary one. For he knew what we were like, all of us who came from Western countries: we were self-willed, obstinate, *licentious*. On the last word his voice cracked with emotion, his hand went further and deeper. *Licentious,* he repeated, and then, rolling himself across the bed so that he now lay completely pressed against me, he asked "How many men have you slept with?" He took my hand and made me hold him: how huge and hot he was! He pushed hard against me. "How many? Answer me!" he commanded, urgent and dangerous. But I was no longer afraid: now he was not an unknown quantity nor was the situation any longer new or strange. *"Answer me, answer me!"* he cried, riding on top of me, and then he cried *"Bitch!"* and I laughed in relief.

I QUITE LIKED being back in Delhi with Henry. I had lots of baths in our marble bathroom, soaking in the tub for hours and making myself smell nice with bath-salts. I stopped wearing Indian clothes and took out all the dresses I'd brought with me. We entertained quite a bit, and Ramu scurried around in his white coat, emptying ash-trays. It wasn't a bad time. I stayed around all day in the apartment with the air-conditioner on and the curtains drawn to keep out the glare. At night we drove over to other people's apartments for buffet suppers of boiled ham and potato salad; we sat around drinking in their living rooms, which were done up more or less like ours, and talked about things like the price of whisky, what was the best hill station to go to in the summer, and servants. This last subject often led to other related ones like how unreliable Indians were and how it was impossible ever to get anything done. Usually this subject was treated in a humorous way, with lots of funny anecdotes to illustrate, but occasionally someone got quite passionate; this happened usually if they were a bit drunk, and then they went off into a long thing about how dirty India was and backward, riddled with vile superstitions—evil they said, corrupt, corrupting.

Henry never spoke like that—maybe because he never got drunk enough—but I

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know he didn't disagree with it. He disliked the place very much and was in fact thinking of asking for an assignment elsewhere. When I asked where, he said the cleanest place he could think of. He asked how would I like to go to Geneva. I knew I wouldn't like it one bit, but I said all right. I didn't really care where I was. I didn't care much about anything these days. The only positive feeling I had was for Henry. He was so sweet and good to me. I had a lot of bad dreams nowadays and was afraid of sleeping alone, so he let me come into his bed even though he dislikes having his sheets disarranged and I always kick and toss about a lot. I lay close beside him, clinging to him, and for the first time I was glad that he had never been all that keen on sex. On Sundays we stayed in bed all day reading the papers and Ramu brought us nice English meals on trays. Sometimes we put on a record and danced together in our pyjamas. I kissed Henry's cheeks which were always smooth —he didn't need to shave very often—and sometimes his lips which tasted of toothpaste.

Then I got jaundice. It's funny, all that time I spent travelling about and eating anything anywhere, nothing happened to me, and now that I was living such a clean life with boiled food and boiled water, I got sick. Henry was horrified. He immediately segregated all his and my things, and anything that I touched had to be sterilised a hundred times over. He was for ever running into the kitchen to check up whether Ramu was doing this properly. He said jaundice was the most catching thing there was, and though he went in for a whole course of precautionary inoculations that had to be specially flown in from the States, he still remained in a very nervous state. He tried to be sympathetic to me, but couldn't help sounding reproachful most of the time. He had sealed himself off so carefully, and now I had let this in. I knew how he felt, but I was too ill and miserable to care. I don't remember ever feeling so *ill*. I didn't have any high temperature or anything, but all the time there was this terrible nausea. First my eyes went yellow, then the rest of me as if I'd been dyed in the colour of nausea, inside and out. The whole world went yellow and sick. I couldn't bear anything: any noise, any person near me, worst of all any smell. They couldn't cook in the kitchen any more because the smell of cooking made me scream. Henry had to live on boiled eggs and bread. I begged him not to let Ramu into my bedroom for, although Ramu always wore nicely laundered clothes, he gave out a smell of perspiration which was both sweetish and foul and filled me with disgust. I was convinced that under his clean shirt he wore a cotton vest, black with sweat and dirt, which he never took off but slept in at night in the one-room servant quarter where he lived crowded together with all his family in a dense smell of cheap food and bad drains and unclean bodies.

I knew these smells so well—I thought of them as the smells of India, and had never minded them; but now I couldn't get rid of them, they were like some evil flood soaking through the walls of my air-conditioned bedroom. And other things I hadn't minded, had hardly bothered to think about, now came back to me in a terrible way so that waking and sleeping I saw them. What I remembered most often was the disused well in the Rajasthan fort out of which I had drunk water. I was sure now that there had been a corpse at the bottom of it and I saw this corpse with the flesh swollen and blown but the eyes intact: they were huge like the guru's eyes and they stared, glazed and jellied, into the darkness of the well. And worse than seeing this corpse, I could taste it in the water that I had drunk—that I was still drinking—yes, it was as if it was now, at this very moment, that I was raising my cupped hands to my mouth and feeling the dank water lap round my tongue. I screamed out loud at the taste of the dead man and I called to Henry and clutched his hand and begged him to get us sent to Geneva quickly, quickly. He disengaged his hand—he didn't like me to touch him at this time—but he promised. Then I grew calmer, I shut my eyes and tried to think of Geneva and of washing out my mouth with Swiss milk.

I GOT BETTER, but I was very weak. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I started to cry, My face still had a yellow tint, my hair was limp and faded; I didn't look old but I didn't look young any more

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either. There was no flesh left, and no colour. I was drained, hollowed out. I was wearing a white night-dress and that increased the impression. Actually, I reminded myself of Jean. I thought so this is what it does to you (I didn't quite know what I meant by it—jaundice in my case, a *guru* in hers; but it seemed to come to the same). When Henry told me that his new assignment had come through, I burst into tears again; only now it was with relief. I said let's go now, let's go quickly, I became quite hysterical so Henry said all right; he too was impatient to get away before any more of those bugs he dreaded so much caught up with us. The only thing that bothered him was that the rent had been paid for three months and the landlord refused to refund. Henry had a fight with him about it but the landlord won. Henry was furious but I said never mind, let's just get away and forget all about all of them. We packed up some of our belongings and sold the rest; the last few days we lived in an empty apartment with only a couple of kitchen chairs and a bed. Ramu was very worried about finding a new job.

JUST BEFORE we were to leave for the airport and were waiting for the car to pick us up, I went on the terrace. I don't know why I did that, there was no reason. There was nothing I wanted to say goodbye to, and no last glimpses I wanted to catch. My thoughts were all concentrated on the coming journey and whether to take air-sickness pills or not. The sky from up on the terrace looked as immense as ever, the city as small. It was evening and the light was just fading and the sky wasn't any definite colour now: it was sort of translucent like a pearl but not an earthly pearl. I thought of the story the little saintly old woman had told about Krishna's mother and how she saw the sun and the moon and world upon world in his mouth. I liked that phrase so much—world upon world—I imagined them spinning round each other like glass balls in eternity and everything as shining and translucent as the sky I saw above me. I went down and told Henry I wasn't going with him. When he realised—and this took some time—that I was serious, he knew I was mad. At first he was very patient and gentle with me, then he got in a frenzy. The car had already arrived to take us. Henry yelled at me, he grabbed my arm and began to pull me to the door. I resisted with all my strength and sat down on one of the kitchen chairs. Henry continued to pull and now he was pulling me along with the chair as if on a sleigh. I clung to it as hard as I could but I felt terribly weak and was afraid I would let myself be pulled away. I begged him to leave me. I cried and wept with fear—fear that he would take me, fear that he would leave me.

Ramu came to my aid. He said it's all right Sahib, I'll look after her. He told Henry that I was too weak to travel after my illness but later, when I was better, he would take me to the airport and put me on a plane. Henry hesitated. It was getting very late, and if he didn't go, he too would miss the plane. Ramu assured him that all would be well and Henry need not worry at all. At last Henry took my papers and ticket out of his inner pocket. He gave me instructions how I was to go to the air company and make a new booking. He hesitated a moment longer—how sweet he looked all dressed up in a suit and tie ready for travelling, just like the day we got married—but the car was hooting furiously downstairs and he had to go. I held on hard to the chair. I was afraid if I didn't, I might get up and run after him. So I clung to the chair, trembling and crying.

Ramu was quite happily dusting the remaining chair. He said we would have to get some more furniture. I think he was glad that I had stayed and he still had somewhere to work and live and didn't have to go tramping around looking for another place. He had quite a big family to support.

I SOLD THE TICKET Henry left with me but I didn't buy any new furniture with it. I stayed in the empty rooms by myself and very rarely went out. When Ramu cooked anything for me, I ate it, but sometimes he forgot or didn't have time because he was busy looking for another job. I didn't like living like that but I didn't know what else to do. I was afraid to go out: everything I had once liked so much—people, places, crowds, smells—I now feared

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and hated. I would go running back to be by myself in the empty apartment. I felt people looked at me in a strange way in the streets; and perhaps I was strange now from the way I was living and not caring about what I looked like any more; I think I talked aloud to myself sometimes—once or twice I heard myself doing it. I spent a lot of the money I got from the air ticket on books. I went to the bookshops and came hurrying back carrying armfuls of them. Many of them I never read, and even those I did read, I didn't understand very much. I hadn't had much experience in reading these sort of books—like the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta Sutras*—but I liked the sound of the words and I liked the feeling they gave out. It was as if I were all by myself on an immensely high plateau breathing in great lungfuls of very sharp, pure air. Sometimes the landlord came to see what I was doing. He went round all the rooms, peering suspiciously into corners, testing the fittings. He kept asking how much longer I was going to stay; I said till the three months rent was up. He brought prospective tenants to see the apartment, but when they saw me squatting on the floor in the empty rooms, sometimes with a bowl of half-eaten food which Ramu had neglected to clear away, they got nervous and went away again rather quickly. After a time the electricity got cut off because I hadn't paid the bill. It was very hot without the fan and I filled the tub with cold water and sat in it all day. But then the water got cut off too. The landlord came up twice, three times a day now. He said if I didn't clear out the day the rent was finished he would call the police to evict me. I said it's all right, don't worry, I shall go. Like the landlord, I too was counting the days still left to me. I was afraid what would happen to me.

TODAY the landlord evicted Ramu out of the servant quarter. That was when Ramu came up to ask for money and said all those things. Afterwards I went up on the terrace to watch him leave. It was such a sad procession. Each member of the family carried some part of their wretched household stock, none of which looked worth taking. Ramu had a bed with tattered strings balanced on his head. In two days time I too will have to go with my bundle and my bedding. I've done this so often before—travelled here and there without any real destination—and been so happy doing it; but now it's different. That time I had a great sense of freedom and adventure. Now I feel compelled, that I *have* to do this whether I want to or not. And partly I don't want to, I feel afraid. Yet it's still like an adventure, and that's why besides being afraid I'm also excited, and most of the time I don't know why my heart is beating fast, is it in fear or in excitement, wondering what will happen to me now that I'm going travelling again.

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Picture of the Bride

Alone, among the grey crosses and stones,
The slabs of marble, slippery as brawn,
Absolute as theirs the stillness she owns;
Her whiteness darkens the shades on the lawn.

Her features are hidden under the veil
Which also conceals the gleam of her hair;
Sepulchral she seems, not humanly frail,
Whiter and taller than any tomb there.

Vernon Scannell

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Malcolm Bradbury

Our Writers Today

Who They Are—How They Live

IT IS PROBABLY because of our present cultural uncertainty that in our time students of literature have become very much aware of the way literature is formed by its context, by its immediate environment and the forces, general and specific, which determine our existence as men. They have been very attentive to the fact that works of literature, and men of letters, are not entirely stable and unchanging phenomena, and equally that literary development does not derive only from the internal momentum of the literary tradition as such. Today we are strikingly interested in the very idea of a culture as a body of shared practices and values, and of literary culture as a peculiarly rich and dense form of such patterns and meanings. But we are also strikingly attentive to the change in these things, and the mutability of even the most monumental civilisation. We have, in short, started to look at literary and cultural matters with a rather more sociological eye.

Now this sort of interest can engage us in very broad questions about the state of the culture and the relative claims of art and life, about the social meaning and function of education and humane learning and the way it interfuses with more mundane and practical matters, or with other social-historical needs we come to formulate. Part of the validity and worth of the artist is that he raises our eyes to matters of value which lie finally beyond any of the political or historical reckonings we want to make, any of the more immediate imperatives we want to serve. The writer is one of the great symbols of culture. But what is equally valuable about him is that he acts *within* his specific cultural environment, serving as an explorer of its particular possibilities and limitations, and so constantly rediscovering experience for himself and others by finding the tones and nuances that bind him to those novel communities which constitute his particular audience.

In our own century, we have seen the writer doing these things in a context and a culture in which there has been a vast expansion of literacy, so extending but also in many ways dividing the audience and the nature of literary usage; in which there has been a strong value attached to the literary arts for their educational and humane significance, but also for their use as entertainment or as crude stimulus; in which there has been vast and varied literary flowering, and yet an enormous uncertainty about the financial and cultural viability of the literary forms.

AN INTEREST IN THE PARTICULAR FORTUNES of our literary culture can lead us towards many large and theoretical matters about the virtues and vices of our particular kind of society and the social and cultural choices we have made. It can also lead us towards very much more specific questions about the closer context in which writers write—questions about their social origins, their typical trainings, their financial rewards, their methods of publication, the general relation of writer to audience, the general role and status of the literary profession—and the way these things have altered to the good or the bad the cultural dimensions of our society. For, as is apparent, the immediate conditions of literary creation and consumption do affect and shape the character of a period's writing deeply; and for the writer

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as individual this is perhaps finally where the heart of the issue lies.

Yet the practical features of the literary career are not always easy to determine; and it is striking that, although a good deal of distinguished research has been done to explore these matters for earlier periods,[1] not a great deal of material has been amassed for the present day.[2] If part of the data here must be a history and analysis of the modern literary intelligentsia, such as has been touched on by sociologists of knowledge and others,[3] then another important part is the detailing of the actual working conditions of the writer, his sense of his own role and possibilities, and the simple facts of his income and rewards. Though the changing function of intellectuals and writers in relation to the culture and knowledge they reflect and create, interpret and administer is an important part of the picture, so are the practical details of the aspects of literary production. We can see, for instance, that somewhere around the turn of the century a large change took place in the literary climate—a change so great that we sense a transition taking place into a new "period" of literature: the "modern" period. Now the changes I am speaking of—changes in the actual composition of the profession, the degree to which it has served for certain kinds of people as an attractive life-style and a means of social mobility and so on—are an essential part of the story.

Here the writer is the explorer of his culture in a very practical sense, creating his own means of survival and existence out of the possibilities of their absence. It is with these more practical aspects of the writer's situation that I shall be concerned in these articles.

WHAT IS THE LITERARY PROFESSION IN OUR SOCIETY? We had better begin by saying that the writer's profession is not, of course, in the strict sense a profession at all. It is very much less formal than most of the professions, which have standards of access, selectivity of entry, norms of conduct. Anyone who writes can be a writer. Moreover, the skills are not normally supposed to be ones that can be directly taught, although we have seen attempts at times to teach them —from the postal courses advertised in weekly magazines to the growth, particularly in the United States but now in England too, of the "Creative writing" class.

But writing remains still primarily an activity which depends very much upon intuitions and imaginative gifts that may be stimulated and encouraged, but which cannot normally be easily passed on. In journalism, one of the expanding trades of this and the last century, some instruction exists; and in certain forms of writing like television script writing a good deal of the practice becomes codified so that instruction can occur. But a distinction is normally made between such "practical" forms of writing and "imaginative" writing, with the latter regarded as a matter of personal human quality, inspiration and self-acquired skills. From time to time, patterns of apprenticeship have emerged in some form among serious writers, somewhat on the model of the visual arts; writers have gathered in coteries and acolytes have joined the numbers to be instructed in elements of their craft. In particular, this has occurred in bohemian groups. For instance, there was a notable instructional element in the literary expatriate scene in Paris in the 1920s, when writers like Gertrude Stein and Ford Madox Ford issued aphoristic advice. But there have been no writing schools, as there have been schools of art, ballet or acting. And the teachable elements in literary creation have always been thought to be the subsidiary ones—grammar, rhetoric, and the like. The study of literature abounds, of course, in schools and universities (though only really in our own century has the study of the native literature

[1] I am thinking particularly of such studies as Edwin H. Miller, *The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England* (1959); the brilliant pioneering work of A. S. Collins, in *Authorship in the Days of Johnson* (1927) and *The Profession of Letters: 1780-1832* (1928); Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957); Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public:* 1800-1900 (1957); and J. W. Saunders's recent valuable survey, *The Profession of English Letters* (1964).

[2] So in Saunders's book there is much more material on the earlier period than on our own time. And most of the important information comes from writers themselves or others concerned for their interests, like the Society of Authors.

[3] See, for instance, Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?* (1950); Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (1956); John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (1969); and T. R. Fyvel, *Intellectuals Today* (1968).

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been very strongly emphasised); but of course its purpose is not to produce writers but generally educated men, or critics and scholars.

And it is not, in fact, notably from those who study literature that writers are recruited. A good many of our writers are university graduates, and in particular the products of the ancient universities. But more often than not they have studied history or classics rather than English, and when English has been studied it has not been normally studied with a modern, or a particularly creative, emphasis.

THE WRITER IN OUR SOCIETY is normally the product of his own motivation, and there is no clear-cut path to competence or success. The literary hopeful may acquire some unsystematic support from certain types of patron—from publishers, editors, reviewers and already successful writers. But as a profession of sorts, literature has been both a very open profession and, from the outsider's point of view, a mysteriously closed one. There is no handy advice that can be given to the entrant beyond the most simple: "type clearly on one side of the page," and the like. There are few places to find sophisticated discussion of literary practice. It normally exists only among coteries of the relatively successful, which have never really been particularly open groups. And if the methods of entry to writing in our culture seem somewhat perplexing, so too do the methods by which success is determined.

The tests here are complicated. On the one hand there is the test of public acceptance in a commercial market; and on the other there is critical success, which involves an elaborate complex of often very varied judgment derived from other artists, reviewers at various levels and the literary critics—who may themselves be independent agents or academic professionals. One level of success may automatically cancel out another; it is well known that critical taste and standards are matters of dispute. In our own century we have seen a remarkable professionalisation of the critic at the university level, and more and more he has become the custodian of long-term reputation.

In fact, of course, he is himself somewhat the product of his own professional duties. The writers he prefers, and the judgments he advances, often have a great deal to do with a broad historical assessment of cultural significance, though there can be little doubt that he has a certain vested interest in devoting himself to works that are by nature complex and subject to elaborate decoding. But as, in a context of change, long-term assents about standards and values seem to have seriously declined in the culture, he carries a large burden of responsibility. And there can be little doubt that a certain part of minority literature is now written for the critic and the students whom he teaches. In fact they are now a basic sector of the book-buying public, and the £35 which local authorities grant students for book purchase is a significant factor in modern literary economics. There are, however, other constituencies the writer can appeal to—the young, for instance—and considerable success with them may give the writer a second chance with the serious critics. Normally, however, most books published in England, as in most countries, are ephemeral and more or less unnoticed. In short, most writers are forgotten.

BUT IF LITERATURE is only dubiously a profession, it does have a number of professional or institutional features. It has behind it an inheritance of practices and assumptions to which most writers of serious disposition seek in some way both to contribute as well as to extend. It lives by an acquired body of forms and conventions of a very sophisticated kind—from such simple formal assumptions as that most novels are (in our day at least) about 75,000 words long to such complex ones as we may, for instance, discern in the aesthetics of literary modernism. Moreover, we have noted the institutionalisation and professionalisation of the literary critic in the university. A similar institutionalisation seems to have taken place among writers themselves in the same conditions of cultural uncertainty.

Writers have begun increasingly to organise in order to protect their interests. In 1883 Walt Besant founded the Society of Authors, specifically to safeguard their needs and position. The rewards of writers had been declining since the beginning of the nineteenth century, partly in consequence of the expansion of the profession, and publishers appeared to be making disproportionate profits. At about the same time, in response to similar needs, another agency for protection of the writer began to become important—the official literary agent (there had long been unofficial versions of this

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kind of middleman). The famous agents of this period—A. P. Watt, Curtis Brown, and J. B. Pinker, for instance—were, of course, not simply concerned with writers' profits but with protecting the writer in some respects from commercial pressures endangering his reputation. Nonetheless, they did serve to systematise the conditions of writing and to make it possible for writing to be conducted primarily for economic motives. At the same time the book-market was itself expanding in directions that encouraged the writer to think of his task in terms of a higher trade in which there was the opportunity delicately to balance the social and critical prestige of high seriousness and dedication with the profits of commerce. However, because of the increasing segmentation of the market the balance was becoming harder to achieve; and in the view of many writers the choice was between one end or the other. Indeed, the tendency towards professionalisation among writers often simply encouraged mercantilism. George Gissing joined the Society of Authors and found it seriously disappointing, "a mere gathering of tradesmen." It was hard to institutionalise the distinction; even such accolades as the Order of Merit or the Poet Laureateship began to seem compromised. So there was a tendency for the serious artist to withdraw to a very narrow constituency of peers and supporters in bohemia, and to hope that posterity would do him justice.

BUT THESE CONDITIONS derived from an expanding use of literary skills in the society, coupled with a marked expansion of literary producers. This was particularly evident at two periods in recent literary history—the period of the expansion of the journalistic media between 1855 and 1900; and the expansion of television between 1950 and the present. In both periods it was generally agreed that the writers needed for such rapid expansion could not be found, and in both periods they easily were. In both cases, the basis of the expansion was an increase in the number of working writers, with dubious benefit for more serious ones. At any rate, the records suggest a very considerable expansion of the numbers of those in the society who called themselves "writers."

The number of professional writers in English society has grown vastly since 1800. The census returns show, for instance, expansions of more than 200% between 1841 and 1851, and again between 1851 and 1861, of those calling themselves writers. Such figures must always be doubtful—as anyone who has met a self-described "writer" at a party will know—and they were made more so by the inclusion in various censuses of "students", "reporters", and "shorthand writers" as part of the same category. Nonetheless, they clearly indicate a trend and they clearly have some significance if we can make the proper reservations. In 1851: 2,671 "authors, editors, writers" are counted in the census. In 1901: the number of "authors, editors, journalists, reporters" is 11,060. In 1931: there are 20,599 "authors, editors, journalists, publicists." In 1951: the same category contains 23,822. In 1961: the similar category contains 37,460.[4]

Richard Findlater has noted that *Whitaker's Reference Catalogue of Current Literature* in fact lists 55,000 to 60,000 writers, of whom perhaps 45,000 to 50,000 are both alive and British. But, as he says, most are not professional authors; and his own estimate, based on reckoning this and the 1951 census return against the records of the Society of Authors, is that there are probably about 6,500—7,000 writers in England producing books, film-scripts or plays with some degree of continuity and productivity.[5] That must modify the figures, but it still means a remarkable expansion.

So the profession is bigger and it is more professional. But that does not of course mean that the numbers of serious writers have vastly increased or that outright genius is easier to come by. Indeed for serious writers it may well be that this expansion is one of the things that has made their own existence less secure and the possibilities of serious dedication less high. The very size and the prevailing general competence of modern literary activity makes distinction harder to define and harder to achieve.

[4] Details from Richard D. Altick, "The Sociology of Authorship: The Social Origins, Education, and Occupations of 1,100 British Authors, 1800-1935," *The Bulletin of the New York Public Library* (June 1962), pp. 389-404; W. J. Reader, *Professional Men* (1966); and census figures.

[5] Richard Findlater, *What Are Writers Worth? A Survey of Authorship* (London, Society of Authors, 1963).

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The largest part of the growth has been in the expansion of communication tasks involving literary skills: in journalism, television writing, advertising. But as writing has more and more found its professional centre in large, institutional and often commercially-oriented activities, the preservation of a context for independent creation has become harder, and very much more difficult to finance. In many respects, the conditions of literary independence that are normally associated with the production of the most considered, serious and enduring writing are those that come from leisure coupled with reasonable lack of economic exposure. But the writer in our time is more and more tempted to put his skills into the employment market, and so to regard them as saleable commodities. In short, the real expansion is the expansion of Grub Street, which is now a good address.

But an expanding profession declines in status and mystique; and it tends to set as its standard efficiency and competence rather than remarkable and rare powers. At one time the constraints here could be conveniently seen as those of bourgeois civilisation, and it was often in the escape from *its* view of the artist that our more sophisticated art came. Since the War it can no longer seem that it is the bourgeois society that is to blame, but rather the assault upon arts economics, by the much more rationalised and centralised state. "The managerial revolution" has occurred among writers too; they less and less administer their own production.

My main interest here is of course with the "serious" writer; and here, I think, the significant story is of his difficulties in finding a role within this overall expansion. Nonetheless, there does remain in our literature an important body of writers whom we do regard seriously; and it is basically with the impact of the modern social situation on them that I am here concerned.

WHERE DO OUR WRITERS COME FROM? *Who were their fathers? How were they educated?*

One marked feature of the English twentieth-century cultural scene is that although the audience for the written word has expanded vastly in the last 150 years, the culture-makers have come from a much narrower social range. Writing may not necessarily be an activity of the educated, but in our society it has tended to be so.

For instance, if we take as a representative sample of the important figures in modern literature the writers listed in the *Concise Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* for the period since 1900, we will find that, of the 72 "imaginative" writers listed (*i.e.* those who are primarily poets, novelists or dramatists), 44 went to public schools of some kind, 14 to grammar schools and 9 had private educations; the rest had little formal secondary schooling or are inadequately documented.[6] Forty-four went to universities, with the two ancient universities taking most of them (Oxford 21, Cambridge 15). The figures deal essentially with reputations made before 1945, after which the grammar schools and, to a small degree, the provincial—and even the new—universities will no doubt be better represented.

A high degree of education is in fact the most common factor among the writers listed, but, as one would expect, this does mean that the writers were substantially drawn from the middle and upper middle classes of society. If we roughly distinguish the wealthy and professional middle classes from the lower middle classes of clerks, shopkeepers, ordinary schoolteachers, dissenting ministers, clerks and lower civil servants, we find that the fathers of 41 of our "sample" fall in the higher part of that group (professional middle classes or above), while distinguishing the working class we will find that only five fathers clearly belong there.

SO IT WOULD SEEM to be true that, as other surveys using different samples have suggested[7], the main sources of serious literature

[6] These comments and the ones that follow are based on a survey, done by Bryan R. Wilson and myself, to form part of a forthcoming book. The survey is of English authors between 1660 and the present, and uses as its "sample" the writers listed in George Watson, *The Concise Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (2nd edition, Cambridge, 1965). (It is hardly necessary to note that Watson's listing of important writers does contain names that could well be replaced by others: but it remains a significant guide.)

[7] Raymond Williams, "The Social History of English Writers," Part 2, Chapter 5, of *The Long Revolution* (1961); and Altick, "The Sociology of Authorship: The Social Origins, Education and Occupations of 1,100 British Writers, 1800-1935," *The Bulletin of the New York Public Library* (June 1962), pp. 389-404.

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in English society have been the "solid" middle classes. One would expect this to be true, but it seems even more true in England than in, say, France or the United States. What is more, the social range from which writers are drawn in England in the nineteenth century would seem to be actually wider than it was in the twentieth, at least up to 1945.

By the 1930s, many writers were obviously embarrassed by their bourgeois personalities, and even, like George Orwell, took on proletarian personalities to conceal it. (The same style still prevails.) Yet clearly literature does tend to derive from groups in which literature has somewhat more than usual significance, and who also have the opportunities to sustain that significance by income and life-pattern. And, since writing is in fact more or less an open profession, it does mean that the responsibility for the creation of culture, in its immediate sense of a written imaginative literature, has been in our time very unevenly spread across the society.

On the evidence of the *Concise Cambridge Bibliography* and the similar sources used by Williams and Altick, it would be possible to create a kind of profile of a typical writer that would serve until after the Second World War. His parents would come from various levels of the professional middle classes. His father is likely to be a surgeon or a doctor, a lawyer or a solicitor, a clergyman or a dissenting minister, a merchant or a businessman, a schoolmaster in a private or a state school, a civil servant or an army officer. He stands a very good chance of having gone to a public school, and then he very probably went to a university, most likely an ancient university. He then himself probably entered one of the professional occupations: teaching, journalism, the civil service or the law. He may later have become a full-time writer, but in many cases it was a part-time occupation and not his primary source of income.

This pattern persists until 1945, when there are signs that it becomes modified. Part of the post-war reaction against Bloomsbury was a class-reaction, as, with the expansion of general and higher education and the growth of meritocratic opportunity, the social range of authors begins to widen. Writing in ENCOUNTER in the 1950s, Stephen Spender observed that the dominance of the middle- or upper-middle-class writer was being threatened by the "angry" generation, who were rebelling against the literary scene and style of the previous generation. Spender called it a "rebellion of the lower middlebrows" and remarked that there was "an aroma of inferiority about its protest." He also pointed out that it tended to derive from the self-conscious provincialism of writers not in London, and that these writers tended to have less positive commitments to writing as a cultural or formal expression.

Reading through the novels and poems of the 1950s, with their celebration of local ordinariness, we can sense the nature of this fairly new type of writer. He was by no means entirely new. The novels of H. G. Wells, C. P. Snow (for instance, Snow's *The Search* (in 1934)), and of an older post-war writer like William Cooper[8] are also very much the products of the lower-middle-class, provincial boy moving his way into the society suspiciously, sceptically—with, perhaps, new forms of knowledge which will bring him the rewards of mobility, and an appropriate doubt about whether they are worth having. And the early letters of Dylan Thomas likewise show him as a very recognisable type of the young, lower-middle-class provincial boy from the grammar-school plotting his way towards literary success.[9]

This kind of populist writer has played a fair part in modern writing; but now he acquires increasing confidence. Behind him lay a grammar-school and university or technical-college education which laid often a new stress on literature as a way both of understanding and criticising society and getting on in it. Today this kind of writer is familiar and exists in large numbers; he tends to be rather more bohemianised, often in regional communities like Liverpool.[10] But the contemporary classlessness of education, the less

[8] On this see my introduction to the reissue of William Cooper's *Scenes from Provincial Life* (Macmillan, 1969).

[9] Dylan Thomas, *Selected Letters* (ed. Fitz-Gibbon, 1966).

[10] For an interesting comment on recent regional "bohemias," see Jim Burns, "La Vie de Bohème," *New Society* (April 27, 1967), p. 619. Dudley Andrew and I discussed earlier versions of the 1940s and 1950s in an article, "The Sugar-Beet Generation," *Texas Quarterly* (Winter, 1960), pp. 38-47. This was the special issue on "Britain." Our title derived from the fact that bohemian existence was often financed by working long hours on the sugar-beet harvest.

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defined stratifications of taste, and the depersonalisation of publishing have all weakened some of the sentiments of class consciousness that existed in literature in the 1950s, when entry into the profession seemed selective and there was an obvious feeling in some quarters that the culture was being monopolised by particular classes and tendencies.

IF THE "EMERGENCE" of new sectors into cultural expression was something of a novelty twenty years ago, it has now ceased to be so. Nor are the links between writing and education quite as tight-knit as they used to be. In an era of expanded universities, many writers have attended universities. But many have not. In any case, such an education is less expected of today's writer, since the traditional benefits of an education—which once helped writers to relate themselves towards the classical past of literary practice—are less urgent needs in the present literary climate. For today culture tends to be increasingly conceived as a mode of personal expression, or the expression of a new and self-aware age-group. Even writers who have been to university are nowadays likely to get more of their literary experience out of the generational sub-cultures through which, with little class differentiation, they move.

IT WOULD BE MISTAKEN to conclude from this account that the origins of writers deeply determine the nature of the literature they produce; a great many other factors are important too. For instance, writers in the nineteenth century, largely drawn from middle-class origins, clearly often have a sense of being part of the majority culture of their times, and draw effectively on the enlightened and expansive aspects of their background.

By the beginning of this century, this tie had been considerably weakened. Most of our important writers were much more aware of belonging to a literary cultural minority. Their background may have made them feel particularly responsible for it, and they were able to support it by a relative degree of financial and social independence. To a considerable extent it was such writers who maintained the survival of poetry—which had ceased to be a profitable activity—and the minority novel. Yet they also often were in marked revolt against their own class, as for instance the writers of the Auden group in the 1930s, and regarded themselves as members of the sceptical general intelligentsia.

Even more important, throughout this period there is a constant infusion of writers from what Raymond Williams calls "minority" sources in the society. Not only is there a large "populist" contingent, from working or lower-middle-class sources, containing some of our most important writers (Lawrence, Hardy, Wells, Gissing), and gaining considerable currency in certain periods—in the 1930s and in the climate of *New Writing*, for instance. There is also a high level of cosmopolitan interaction between cultures in the West, and at the same time a considerable proportion of writers who are foreign born or part foreign, or from the regions and Commonwealth, or from America or Ireland. This is particularly marked over the turn of the century, when there was of course the remarkable "Celtic Twilight" contribution from Ireland (the important Irish figures include George Moore, Wilde, Yeats, Shaw, Lady Gregory, Joyce, Synge, O'Casey and Frank O'Connor) and from the Commonwealth (Katherine Mansfield), a very large contribution from American expatriates (Henry James, Henry Harland, Stephen Crane, Harold Frederic, Pound, John Gould Fletcher, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot), a good number of part-foreign writers (Ford Madox Hueffer, Wyndham Lewis, Hilaire Belloc) and several continental writers (most notably Joseph Conrad).

One can hardly doubt (as Raymond Williams suggests) one's general literary critical impression that the literature of this period draws singularly and extensively for its pattern of development on cultural funds and attitudes that come from outside the mainstream of the established national culture. Add to this the number of English writers who were themselves for a time expatriates elsewhere (Norman Douglas, Arnold Bennett, George Gissing, Robert Louis Stevenson, D. H. Lawrence) and a wide class-range and culture-range becomes apparent. A not dissimilar pattern has developed post-war. It would seem, in fact, that the ranks of English writers—perhaps, in fact, of writers generally—have tended to come from emergent, culturally uncertain or assertive, sectors in the social community: rather as with boxers and professional entertainers.

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And in periods of special fluidity and change —the turn-of-the-century period, and then again the post-war period—one notices the phenomenon particularly.

ALTOGETHER THE PORTRAIT of modern literature adds up to one in which the fact that the middle classes have made themselves particularly responsible for our literature has inhibited neither its growth or its range. Indeed it seems to have created a pattern in which a belief in literature's worth and social value (which tends in our society to reside particularly in these classes) has been coupled with a desire to expand it imaginatively and socially.

As we have seen, statistical details of this sort tell us only so much; they finally reveal only a little about the values and perspectives embodied in the writing that is done. They usually remind us, though, that modern writing has not simply been an activity of those who have grounds for radical dissent with the nature of our culture and society. Indeed, as I say, it would seem that good writing depends at least to a point on those who value it as a *traditional* activity. The result is that modern English literary culture has been formed out of a pattern of interplay between writers who have sought to find the roots and sources of art in new and different places, and those who have felt themselves to be maintaining the humanistic stock of the tradition: both groups have lived in common contact and dialogue. The sense of difficulty or anguish in the culture has thus alternated with a sense of its stability. If one of the essential aspects of 20th-century writing is a revulsion from bourgeois values ("The artist's exile from middle-class society accounts in part for the character of our literature," says William York Tindall in a fairly representative judgment[11]) then another important aspect is its deep derivation *from* bourgeois society, in which, on the whole, the values of literary culture have been particularly well sustained.

(A concluding article will be published next month.)

[11] William York Tindall, *Forces in Modern British Literature: 1885-1956* (rev. ed. 1956).

Improper Use

Give me patience, lord.
I make the same mistakes
Over and over again.
But if I pulled the cord
And you slammed on the brakes
And the whole buffering train

Ground to a halt, God knows
What spot we'd shudder to.
Those piles of waiting sacks
By ruled potato rows
Up the line from Crewe
And farms up rutted tracks

And a woman hanging out
Her smalls like help-me flags,
The vast unnerving silence,
The tiny hand-cupped shout
Of a labourer who gags
"Run out of juice?" and pylons

And twenty-five quid due
(Payable as under)
To the British Railways Board.
No, better to whistle through
Greater Boob and Blunder,
Given patience, lord.

J. C. Hall

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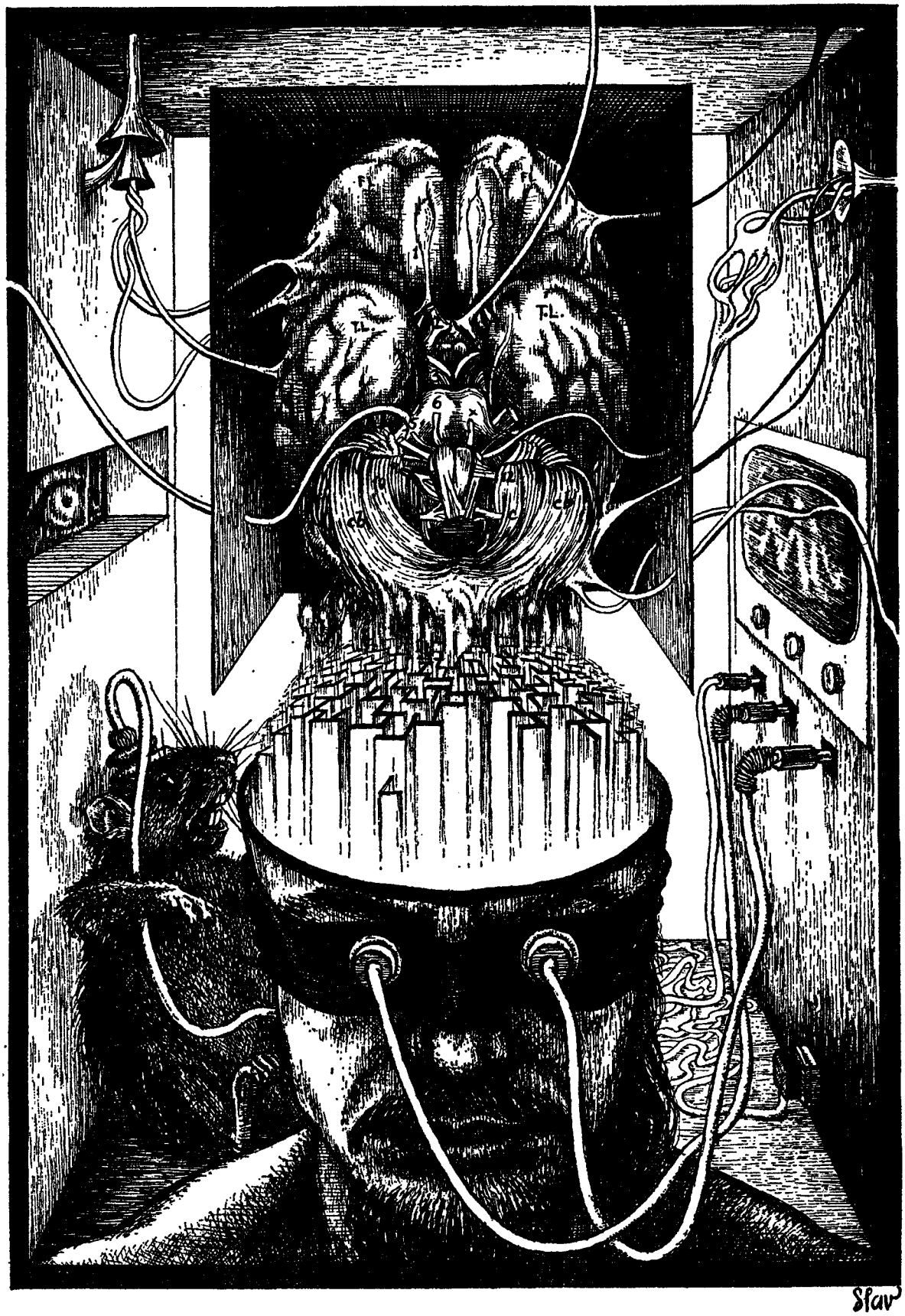

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Gordon Rattray Taylor

A New View of the Brain

IT LOOKS as if research on the brain may be the most dynamic area in biology during the next thirty years, just as molecular biology has been during the past thirty. Significantly, some leaders in the latter field, such as Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins, have been turning their attention to this promising topic. The more optimistic workers in this field even speak of "cracking the problem by the end of the century." Since the brain is the most highly organised form of matter known to exist, it is rather improbable that a full scientific account of it will be developed in only thirty years. But certainly great advances are imminent, and the social and ethical consequences will be dramatic. One has only to think of what would follow if we could raise intelligence or improve memory at will to see that the fall-out from brain research could rock society.

Furthermore, as understanding grows, so will the suspicion that man is simply an elaborate machine. Many people find the idea of being a machine repugnant; if the fact is established beyond doubt it would certainly intensify the sense of aimlessness and unimportance which is already fairly widespread; it might be taken to justify materialism and waste of life. And, of course, if the contrary is established, the implication would be of even more intellectual interest.

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The new feeling of optimism about the possibility of understanding the brain comes largely, I think, from the development of the computer, though not just because computers can be made to play a few quasi-human tricks. Centuries ago, it seemed too much to believe that a few pounds of sloppy jelly could perform the complex, subtle and beautifully co-ordinated actions of which man is capable: the playing of a concerto, for example, to say nothing of its composition. It seemed easier to suppose it was simply an anchorage for some vague, immaterial "mind" where the real work was done. This of course was explaining the unknown by the still more unknown. (Descartes, who saddled us with this dualism, was very conscious of the recent persecution of Galileo, and may simply have been playing safe.) What has recently become clear is that the brain is indeed precisely the kind of mechanism required to produce the kind of behaviour we know it produces. The computer has demonstrated that networks of a few thousand rather simple switches are just what you need to produce reasoning, decision-making, analysis of sensory data, and various other brain-like activities.[1]

Like the digital computer, the brain also consists of a network of switches—the nerve-cells or neurones. But if the brain is a computer, it is one to drive an engineer to despair. Where the computer has a few thousand switches, the brain has ten thousand million neurones. (An estimate made many years ago, by counting the cells in small slices of tissue and multiplying up. Though constantly quoted, it may be quite

[1] A good deal has been written on the relation between computers and intelligence. I recommend *The Modeling of Mind*, ed. K. M. Sayre and F. J. Crosson (University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), with contributions by Polanyi, Wittgenstein, McKay, Ryle, Rapoport and others.

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inaccurate.) Moreover, while each switch in a computer normally connects to only two or three other switches, each brain cell is linked to hundreds of other neurones and in certain cases to as many as a quarter of a million. Nor is this all, for the threshold at which each neurone "fires" (discharges an electric pulse), can be shifted. When a pathway is used several times in succession, the threshold falls, so that in future it operates more and more readily—a fact obviously connected with learning. (If disused, it drifts back again to the old threshold.) Also, the thresholds of whole blocks of cells can be shifted by chemical substances (neurohumors) diffused for the purpose—a fact connected with mood-changes, especially excitement and depression. The same sort of effect is produced when we stimulate ourselves artificially with strychnine or depress our activity with alcohol.

THERE ARE ALSO other ways in which neurones outshine electrical switches—notably an ability to discriminate small time-differences—but enough has been said to make it clear that the brain is a computer of fantastic subtlety. The number of patterns which can be set up on a device with so many units capable of being connected in so many ways is uncountably large—far more in number than the total number of atoms in the universe. Accordingly, if our relatively tiny and crude computers can produce certain types of brain-like behaviour, it is not at all incredible that a device so complex as the brain can produce far more elaborate forms of behaviour.

Dr Grey Walter once calculated that if every connection in the brain could be reproduced for twopence and every neurone for a shilling, a brain-like computer would cost £1,000,000,000,500,000,000. Today we could probably knock three zeros off this figure, but that is still far from cheap. And it would need most of the country's electricity to run it, as against the brain's 25 watts. (In fairness to computers, however, it must be added that they calculate more accurately and far faster than the brain, which is why we bother with them.) However, it is not just certain structural similarities of brain and computer which have created an impetus. It is rather the fact that writing programmes for computers has forced people to think closely about how reasoning is done.

Fourfold Computer

IT MIGHT BE MORE ACCURATE to say that the brain is not one computer, but four. Deep in the middle of the skull lies what we can loosely call the "old brain"—old in an evolutionary sense. This is concerned with basic functions such as hunger and thirst, arousal and attention, sexual drive, pleasure and pain, and also smell—the main sensory mode of primitive creatures. As life progressed up the evolutionary ladder, a sheet of cells started to develop from the front edge of the old brain and spread backwards over it like a cap. It began to wrinkle and crumple in the attempt (excuse the teleology) to pack an ever-bigger surface into the skull. This is the cortex or rind, and it carries out the complex operations of analysing vision and speech, planning and abstract thought and organising complex motor patterns (motor=physical movements). As we shall see in a moment, the interaction of old and new brain serves to explain some of the odder features of human behaviour. The cortex is a double computer, split down the middle, but with rich cross-connections. Originally this may have been to provide spare capacity in case of injury or failure, just as airlines use twin computers for seat-booking. In man, one hemisphere has been pre-empted to handle the problems of speech. For every object and function in the world there is both an image and a word, so that speech doubles the load on the brain. Finally, below the back of the cortex is the cerebellum or little brain, which handles muscular co-ordination and is sometimes described as the "automatic pilot." It takes over learned patterns and enables you to ride a bicycle while using your cortex to think of something else. Lower still, in the brain-stem, is yet another system of preliminary filters responsible for attention.

Some of the new optimism about understanding the brain comes from the fact that we now have means of investigating the more primitive parts of the brain. Early in the century it was only possible to get at the outer part, the cortex, of a live, functioning brain and the old brain was a complete mystery. Some thirty years ago, methods of plunging fine wires through the cortex into the structures beneath were developed. (The damage done to the cortex is negligible.) By means of these wires, the experimenter could detect whether the cell in which the tip of the wire

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rested was discharging or not, when the animal was engaged in any particular activity. Equally, a current could be applied to the wire, so as to destroy the cells at the tip, and the effect on behaviour observed. Later the animal would be sacrificed and the exact position of the tip determined by dissection. This technique revealed the presence of centres apparently regulating thirst, hunger, and other basic functions.

Of these the most intriguing was the "pleasure centre" discovered by James Olds in 1953. The public was so fascinated by the idea of limitless pleasure that the point of this discovery was generally overlooked. Coupled with the pleasure centre is an "unpleasure centre" mediating fear and rage. Thus the brain contains a very basic approach-avoidance mechanism, at the service of various higher systems, and capable of evoking appropriate bodily responses. Moreover, recent work makes it rather clear that the supposed thirst and hunger centres in the hypothalamus are not appetite centres at all; they are centres of emotional intensification, and when stimulated, they cause the animal to work harder for *any* reward, not just food or drink; or conversely to avoid the stimulus.[2]

It is already emerging that some practical problems can be explained by a shift in the balance between the positive and negative centres. Like an ordinary thermostat, they tend to a balance point, but the precise point can be reset higher or lower. The taker of hard drugs seems to shift the balance permanently towards depression, so that he needs his drug to restore him to normality. Something similar may occur in clinical depression. It is significant that withdrawn schizophrenics, after stimulation of their pleasure centre, become normal and accessible for a while.

Spark versus Soup

ANOTHER GREAT SHIFT of emphasis which has transformed brain research is the realisation that the brain is not merely an electrical device but also a chemical one.

Soon after the Swiss physiologist, W. R. Hess, had won a Nobel award in 1949 for his electrical studies of the inner brain, S. P. Grossman and other researchers found that minute amounts of chemical substances could be dripped through tiny tubes into the inner brain causing remarkable changes in behaviour.

Alan Fisher dripped male hormone into the brain of a rat, expecting it to display sexual behaviour towards a female in the same cage. To his intense surprise (and no doubt that of the female rat) the animal picked up the female, carried her to a corner and tried to mother her. Given suitable material, he started to build a nest. When the tube was shifted to a slightly different point, the expected male behaviour was evoked, and between these positions a mixture of sexual and maternal. (The male tried to mount the female while carrying a pup in its mouth.) Similarly, females could be induced to act like males. Moreover, different substances dropped in the same place had different effects. The discovery that specific chemicals affected specific groups of neurones in specific ways made it clear that the brain had a complex chemical pattern, as well as an electrical one. It was found that various enzymes (which regulate specific biochemical processes) are distributed through the brain in distinctive patterns, indicating that the chemical goings-on in one part may be quite different from those in another, and that the brain secretes many specialised neurohumors.

Besides, great hopes are now being pinned on explaining memory in chemical terms—twenty years ago the favoured theories were electrical. The fact that genetic information can be coded into a molecule (demonstrated by the discovery of DNA and RNA) gives rise to the hope that other types of information could also be so coded into suitable proteins—a hope which accounts for the sudden interest of the molecular biologists in the subject.

TO THE EXTENT THAT the brain consists of neurones triggering one another to fire, it resembles a digital computer. But there is another type of computer, the analogue computer. In essence, a computer of this kind represents a continuously changing variable (whether it be temperature, the price of wheat, or the firing rate of a nerve-cell) by a continuously changing current, rather than by a series of numbers. It is therefore intriguing that, in its chemical activities, the brain resembles an analogue computer. Thus it

[2] See S. P. Grossman, "The VMH: a Center for Affective Reactions, Satiety or Both?", in *Physiology and Behaviour* (1966) vol. 1, pp. 1-9.

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combines both the known types of computer in a single structure. Hitherto, neurologists have been obsessed by the electrical/digital aspect: they will have to learn to think of both aspects simultaneously.

The discovery that the brain is, in a macroscopic sense, a chemical device as well as an electrical one, echoed a similar discovery, made much earlier, at the microscopic level. Early in the century it was a matter of bitter controversy whether nerve conduction itself was electrical or chemical: this was irreverently known as the battle of the "Spark" men and the "Soup" men. Today we know that *both* were right. An electrical impulse travels along each nerve fibre; at the end of it it releases a flood of chemicals (transmitter substances) which cross the gap to the next neurone, either stimulating it or inhibiting it. Thus the chemical and electrical behaviour of the brain are closely integrated.

From these discoveries comes the rapid growth of "psychopharmacology" and such startling discoveries as that anxiety is linked with the level of sodium lactate (chemically a rather simple substance) in the blood. Schizophrenia is claimed by some to have a chemical cause. The discovery of the hallucinogens has of course strongly boosted this approach.[3]

IN THE 1930s, the big excitement was the discovery of electrical brain waves, which could be recorded by a device dubbed the "electoencephalograph" (EEG). Thousands of miles of paper were soon covered with wavy lines, as the new specialists recorded from the skulls of young and old, sick and well, waking and sleeping, thinking or vegetating subjects. But the promise was not fulfilled. The number of neurones producing these currents was too large to produce any but crude effects. The new machines could identify gross disturbances like epilepsy or brain tumour (and so were clinically valuable) and general states like alertness or inertness, but not much else. Meanwhile, theoreticians concentrated on trying to make models of the brain in terms of electrical networks.

One day, I have no doubt, when we know more, electrical methods of study will become more powerful, but at present the chemical approach, being cruder and easier, is in the ascendant. Methodologically, it is rather easy to administer drugs to animals or man and see what happens; the resulting observations may have an immediate commercial and clinical pay-off. This approach has given us the tranquillizers which have transformed the treatment of depression. In the mid-1950s, for the first time in decades, admissions to mental institutions began to decline. Even more noticeable, of course, is the impact of the psychedelic drugs. And now we have drugs which can claw people back from the early stages of senility and improve the ability to recall memories. Parallel with these rather hit-or-miss activities, neuropharmacologists are investigating the brain's own neurohumors and transmitter substances. In the long run, these more fundamental studies may have even more dramatic pay-offs.

The "Black Box" Myth

FROM ALL THIS WORK a new view of the brain is emerging. For nearly a century the brain has been compared endlessly to a telephone exchange. The number dialled into an exchange somehow selects an outgoing channel to the desired subscriber. The behaviourists seized on this idea: they hoped by using simple "inputs" and observing the associated "outputs" to be able to deduce the rules by which the stimuli were linked to the responses. Direct knowledge of the brain's internal mechanisms they regarded as unattainable. This conception of a relatively simple linking of input to output in the brain has proved to be hopelessly jejune.

It is now absolutely clear that the brain does not merely link stimulus and response: it is much, much smarter than this. In the first place, it is a filter. If it attempted to attend to all the information supplied by the senses it would be swamped within seconds. Down in the brain-stem, where the thick cord of nerves from the spine swells before entering the old brain, are mechanisms which select the new and interesting, while suppressing the less important. Furthermore, nerves run from the brain to the eye and ear, as well as conversely. The brain tells the ear: "Now is hardly the time to bother with that—I am only interested in this." At a cocktail party, we concentrate on what our *vis-à-vis* is saying and ignore the

[3] See, for instance, C. R. B. Joyce (ed.) *Psychopharmacology: Dimensions and Perspectives* (Tavistock/Lippincott, 1968).

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conversation going on behind us. (Or sometimes the reverse.) If our name is spoken behind us, we may suddenly be aware of the fact. The copytaster in the brain-stem has said: "Hey, this concerns you" and has broken in on our concentration. Likewise, a mother may wake to the cry of her child while sleeping through the roar of a passing motor-cycle. Thus the brain is not merely a passive spectator.

In general too, the brain soon disregards anything which doesn't change, and swiftly directs attention to anything which does. Movements particularly attract its attention, a fact which animals exploit when they "freeze" to escape being seen. Even when fully in view, a motionless animal or man will be overlooked, if not too close or betrayed by sharp contrast with the background.

In another significant experiment, an animal is exposed repeatedly to a buzz or "beep" of given length, until the signals from its brain indicating "something new is happening" die away. Then the beep is reduced in length. Immediately the novelty-signals reappear, as if to say: "Something new——the beep is not sounding when it should be." Thus the brain not only attends to stimuli but to *absence* of stimuli—something which does not fit the simple behaviourist/telephone-exchange conception at all. It is obvious that it must compare the actual beep with its memorised notion of what a beep should be like: the stimulus consists in the difference. The inference is that it is at least equally sophisticated in its response to other types of stimulus.

Thus stimulus-response experiments are defective because they ignore the fact that an animal *decides* what it regards as a stimulus. A cat, listening to a musical tone, loses interest in it when a mouse comes into view, as can be demonstrated by electrical recording from the brain (as well as by common sense).

THE SECOND THING about the brain—obvious enough to the layman, but currently regarded as a brilliantly novel idea by psychologists—is that it tries to make sense of what it sees, instead of absorbing it blankly and uncritically like a tape-recorder or a camera.

Optical illusions have been much used to demonstrate this point. Slowly inflate a white balloon in a dark room, and the observer will probably conclude it is coming towards him. In a majority of cases in real life, when we see objects getting larger without changing in shape, it is because they are approaching. So, when we remove other clues to distance, we conclude the balloon is probably approaching. Actually the illusion is very difficult to produce. The brain uses all available clues, such as increasing detail, binocular vision, obscuring of intermediate objects, etc, to assess distance and, even in the artificial conditions of the laboratory, with all these clues deliberately minimised, it soon arrives at the right assessment. Even when shown the shadow of a moving object on a flat screen. it can efficiently reconstruct its three-dimensional shape by analysing the relative movements of the various parts of the shadow. (Consider the kind of shadow which would be cast by, say, a rotating weathercock.) As Blake said, "The fool sees not the tree the wise man sees. . . ." The same is true in much subtler instances. At all levels of analysis, the brain tries to extract meaning. A social response may be construed as "insulting." Possible explanations will be reviewed to explain an unusual noise in the night, and so on. Place a man in a box, in which he can get steak and chips by pressing a lever, and he will spend more time wondering what the hell is going on than he will in scoffing steak. The higher animals are not far behind in this respect.

What has also emerged is that the brain has remarkable ability to redistribute its available information channels as the situation demands. We see this rather crudely when a car driver, who has been chatting to his companion, stops in mid-sentence while he negotiates a difficult driving situation; the part of the brain doing the driving has commandeered some of the channels which were being used to express ideas as speech, in order to be able to process more information.

But this is true in a more general sense. In simple perception, the brain can use many channels in parallel to take in a wide range of information in an undiscriminating way, or can "concentrate"—make a lot of channels available to one topic and ignore the rest. And what is true of the (relatively) simple act of perception is also true of the life scheme in general. An undue concentration on one type of input needs correcting by a widening of vistas, hence perhaps the popularity of the mind-expanding drugs, as Karl Pribram has

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suggested. For some people, of course, the problem is the other way about.

Also relevant in this connection is the curious fact that the brain develops its powers by practice. If the eyelids of an animal are sewn up at birth, and freed at maturity, it cannot see and will never learn to do so. The brain has failed to develop the necessary connections at the period when it was able to do so. In man, sight has been restored to people who have gone blind (but not to those blind from birth): in such cases it takes months to learn to see again. Not only are numerous connections established during development, but certain brain cells migrate to key positions where they can feed data to other cells. The brain of an animal provided with a wide variety of tasks and of stimuli develops strikingly more numerous connections than one placed in an impoverished environment—a fact which educators have been quick to notice. Thus the brain is in a two-way dynamic relationship with its environment—a conception far removed from the inert "black box" conception.

AN ESPECIALLY CURIOUS FEATURE of the brain is that it is continuously in action. Neurones do not simply discharge when a message is to be passed, but are firing—apparently at random—all the time and at about the same frequency. Hence for a message to be significant, there has to be a change in the volume of firing. This is probably related to the brain's need (teleology again!) to achieve a reliable performance with unreliable components—incidentally, a task which human engineers are now beginning to worry about in fields as diverse as telephone systems and space-flight. It is said that 100,000 brain cells perish every day; but brain performance shows little deterioration until senility sets in, and then it is sudden. The reason seems to be that whole banks of cells are involved even in the simplest action, working in parallel. It would obviously be highly inconvenient if one's arm suddenly shot out because a single neurone had fired by mistake, or had failed to fire. Neurobiologists sum this up by saying that the brain is parallel and probabilistic.

In short, the brain is now conceived by scientists as highly active in its approach to the environment—picking and choosing its input, adapting its wiring and its chemistry, responding to changes in the situation rather than to the situation as such, marshalling and redistributing its equipment, and so on. All of which the layman knew all along. Now that scientists have caught up with the obvious, there is real hope of progress.

An Army of Brain Cells

BUT OF ALL THE INSIGHTS into brain action achieved in recent years one stands head and shoulders above the others: that associated primarily with the names of David Hübel and Torsten Wiesel of the Harvard Medical School (but arising from earlier work by H. Harline, Jerome Lettvin and others.)[4] By tortuous procedures involving placing electrodes in single cells of the retina, visual cortex and optic nerves of frogs, monkeys, and cats, they have revealed the principles by which the information presented to the eye is extracted. By so doing they have thrown a brilliant shaft of light on how the brain works and have opened up a great range of experimental opportunity, now being pursued.

Briefly, ignoring differences between different species of animal, the brain looks for contrasts of light and dark (edges), the orientation of such lines and edges (vertical, horizontal, slanting) and their direction of movement.[5] The reader should visualise the nerve-cells involved in this analysis as arranged in a tree, or a military hierarchy. The private soldiers in the nerve army represent the retinal receptors. At the next hierarchial level up, the corporals report on groups of privates: if twenty of them in a horizontal row simultaneously report the passing of an "edge" the corporal knows a horizontal line or edge is present. If the commander gets reports of this line from five

[4] Their original paper was D. H. Hübel and T. N. Wiesel: "Receptive Fields, Binocular Interaction and Functional Architecture in the Cat's Visual Cortex." *J. Physiol.* (1962) vol. 160, p. 106. See also: J. Y. Lettvin, H. R. Maturana, W. S. McCulloch and W. H. Pitts: "What the Frog's Eye Tells the Frog's Brain," in *Proc. Inst. Radio Engineers* (1959) vol. 47, pp. 1940-51.

[5] The frog's retina has an additional capacity; it can detect sharply curved edges, and hence small blobs. Thus it is well equipped to detect small insects entering its field of vision. And since these "bug-detectors" only work on moving objects, it is not distracted by spotty patterns in the background. Frogs are thus specialised even at the retinal level for efficient food-gathering.

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sections, but not from those on either wing, he knows the length of the line. If the company commander gets reports from three platoons of three lines at different angles, he can identify a triangle, and so on.

Using lightly-anaesthetised animals to which lines and moving edges are shown, electrodes are placed in brain cell after brain cell until one is found which discharges when the stimulus is presented. Since there are millions of cells, it may take many hours to find one which responds, and it is largely a matter of luck which rank in the hierarchy is contacted. So progress is slow. However, cells which respond to line-length and angularity (corners) have been detected, and recently cells which respond to two-ness, three-ness and other numbers have been reported. Since number is a concept, this reinforces the hope that such mechanisms may explain the higher brain functions, and are not peculiar to visual analysis alone.

Given this clue to brain action, we can speculate on other instances. For example, there must be a circuit which inspects incoming data to see if it is already familiar. Occasional erroneous firing of the cells in this circuit will give the false impression of familiarity which psychologists call *déja vu*. (A sense of unfamiliarity for familiar material is also found.) Another circuit doubtless adds the label "part of me" to appropriate data, creating what Freud would call the ego (and in the case of kinesthetic data, what Schilder called the body-image). Disorganisation of this circuit would cause the de-personalisation reported by many mentally-disturbed persons.

The important thing about this advance is that it gets us away from the little-man-in-front-of-a-television-set concept. In many popular accounts of brain-function, a little man is depicted inside the head, gazing at a television set connected to the eyes. This clearly leads to an even smaller man inside the first man, gazing at an even smaller set, and thus to an infinite regress. It throws no light on vision.

Yet neurobiologists, until recently, were (to mix the metaphorical images) barking up the same tree. The optic nerve was thought to bring to the visual cortex precisely the patterns which fell on the retina, leaving the question of how the brain analysed these patterns no nearer solution. But now we know that the pattern is already broken up into units of information about movement, contrast (etc.) before ever it reaches the brain. (In frogs, which have no visual cortex, the bulk of the processing is in the retina.) And the fact that only movement evokes a response tallies with the new view of the brain as reporting, not the state of affairs, but *changes* in that state. Diffuse low-level illumination over the entire field evokes no discharges, and images which remain stationary with respect to the retina fade from view. Thus, here again, we must drop the image of a television set reporting all that happens, whether important or not, and substitute a filter letting through only what seems important.

Generalising, we can now see the brain as composed of hierarchies of cells, so interconnected that they can pick out every conceivable pattern of movement, contrast, and colour in the case of visual mechanisms; every rhythm and harmony in the case of auditory mechanisms; and similarly for the other senses, including the kinaesthetic sense of bodily position, visceral tension, and so on. And also every combination of these six inputs. Probably what has prevented our taking such a view before is our inability to comprehend the numerousness of brain cells.[6]

THIS VIEW OF THE BRAIN is reinforced by the work of the great Russian psychologist, Alexander Luria (head of the department of neuropsychology at Moscow University). Working with brain-damaged patients, he has demonstrated the presence of centres with many specific analytic functions. Thus one patient may be unable to distinguish "up" from "down" (or "above" from "below") though fully able to distinguish "left" from "right." Another of his patients started to plane some wood, planed it away to nothing and started planing through the bench. The group of cells responsible for terminating repetitive actions

[6] To illustrate what it means, let us say there are 10 billion brain cells. A typical half-tone engraving one inch square contains 2,500 dots. A page (8 x 10 inches) of a telephone book thus engraved would contain 200,000 dots. Thirty telephone directories of 1,800 pages each would contain 10 billion dots. Spread flat, and ignoring page margins, that is about 3,000 sq. feet of dots. The brain packs this number of cells into a few square feet.

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had been destroyed. Another patient, a bookkeeper, could still draw up a balance sheet although he could not remember the names of his subordinates or speak clearly. Damage to his speech-centres had not affected his writing-centres. Other patients could not recognise by sight an object which they could recognise by touch, or vice versa.

Still more illuminating is the inability to synthesise intended actions into a coherent pattern. Such patients after lighting a candle may put it in their mouth and try to smoke it, or may light the match and throw it away, or go on striking the match after it is burning, or light a match and put it into their mouth, or throw the candle away instead of the match. Others for analogous reasons cannot identify, say, a photograph of a wedding, though they can identify details (*e.g.* a white dress).

These observations indicate that behaviour is broken down into components handled by *specific cell groups* and synthesised into various patterns by senior commanders in the hierarchy, by a system essentially similar to that which Hübel and Wiesel described. The detailed analysis of these perceptual, conative, and motor hierarchies is one of the great tasks lying ahead in brain research.

The Localisation Controversy

THE FOREGOING IMPLIES that functions are specifically localised in the brain. But, as is well known, this question of localisation has long been a matter of intense controversy, and the solving of this riddle is one of the things which encourages optimism. The great von Haller, in 1769, said that the brain was a *sensorium commune,* a single organ composed of parts which were all equivalent, and in 1824 Flourens made a similar claim on the basis of similar evidence, namely, that behaviour can be restored after a brain injury. Simultaneously Bouillaid came to the opposite conclusion because a lesion of a certain part of the brain paralyses some muscles, while that of a different part paralyses others. Broca's discovery of a "speech centre" in 1861 confirmed this view. When electrical stimulation of the brain surface was devised, elaborate charts of localisation were prepared.[7]

In the present century, the pendulum of opinion swung back again when the American psychologist Karl Lashley, taught rats to run mazes and then removed large parts of the brains and let them try again. He found, broadly, that loss of learning was roughly proportional to the amount of tissue removed and that it mattered little what parts were taken. He also made numerous incisions in the cortex, which usually produced no loss of performance at all. At the end of a long life, in which thousands of rats were dispatched, Lashley gloomily remarked: "I sometimes feel, on reviewing the evidence on the localisation of the memory trace, that learning just is not possible. . . ."

Today it is clear that Lashley's work suffered from two limitations. When he cross-hatched the brains of his rats with his scalpel, he did not cut the countless connections running downward to and upward from the thalamus and old brain. The cortex has few lateral connections, and constantly refers its observations, plans, and schemes of movement to the scrutiny of the old brain, which assesses them emotionally. More important, he was studying *memory,* which may well be distributed throughout the brain (as we shall see in a moment). But when we are discussing perception, motor execution, or plan-making, not to mention bodily functions like thirst, sex, and sleep, there is no doubt that these are located in specific areas. Vision is handled at the back of the brain, hearing more towards the top of the head, with an area correlating sound and vision in between; and so on.

Yet though functions are broadly localised, at the cellular level, they have many alternative channels available to them, so that destruction of one channel does not abolish the functions, as I have already mentioned.

Memory & Learning

THE BRAIN'S CAPACITY to learn is fundamental to survival; one could even say that this is what distinguishes it from all

[7] Francis Gall, (1758-1828), the great brain anatomist, was supporting localisation when he suggested that personality characteristics were located in various parts of the cortex—a guess no stupider than that of Descartes, who located reason in the pineal, or Willis who preferred the corpus striatum. Gall is repeatedly mocked as the supposed inventor of phrenology—the claim that character can be determined from the surface of the skull. Actually, this was the idea of his one-time pupil, Spurzheim, and Gall repeatedly disowned it.

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other machines.[8] Any adequate theory of brain-activity must account for it. But learning is a curious process: the brain has to compromise between two requirements. It must not learn too quickly, or it will associate things which have only come together by chance—it must wait for the association to be repeated and become steadily more confident as the repetition grows more numerous. And it must be capable of *unlearning,* so that if conditions change it does not remain rooted in an inappropriate response. Here again, it must not unlearn too quickly, or it will skitter about, a prey to every wind that blows.

Most learning theories, consequently, envisage something analogous to the wearing of a pathway by repeated use, and a tendency for the grass to grow back over the path if it becomes disused. Unfortunately for theory, there is also such a thing as "one-time learning." Equally, there are things we memorise again and again, and as speedily forget. (Personally, I have learned calculus three times and forgotten it each time.) This is partly explicable on the basis that we remember best what we feel most strongly about, and a mechanism in the older brain has been identified which seems to be involved in emotion and memory storage.

But there may be more to it than that. On the one hand, the brain is extraordinarily plastic. An astronaut adapts within hours to the wholly novel condition of weightlessness. If you wear spectacles which invert the image of the world, after a week or so, the image suddenly flips right way up again. On the other hand, the brain is in some respects painfully unadaptable. The animal "imprinted" on a wooden box never succeeds in detaching itself from this unsuitable love-object; and human fetishisms seem similarly impregnable. Also, as is well known, childhood traumas continue to haunt people all their lives. The cause of this strange dichotomy remains mysterious.

[8] Except a few specially programmed computers, which display a primitive kind of learning.

[9] For other difficulties, see G. A. Tallard: *Disorders of Memory and Learning* (Penguin, 1968).

[10] Mid-term memory, lasting half an hour or so, is almost certainly electrical, for if an animal is frozen and then revived, memories formed within the previous half-hour have all vanished, though longer-term memories remain unimpaired, suggesting that the latter have a chemical, not an electrical basis.

It might be easier to understand learning if we could understand memory. The immediate basis for optimism in brain research is due to signs of progress in explaining memory—to be exact, long-term memory, for there are short-term systems which hold memories for minutes, as when we dial an unfamiliar telephone number and then forget it. As already mentioned, the discovery of the genetic mechanisms in which hereditary information is coded into long-chain molecules naturally gives rise to the idea that memory may be likewise coded into long-chain molecules—though how such a code could provide the vivid images and sounds which form part of some memories is hard to tell. Many experiments, however, have now shown that special proteins *are* manufactured when behaviour is learned, and it is claimed that certain kinds of learned experience, *viz.* fear of the dark, can actually be transferred from one animal to another, though most psychologists hesitate to accept such a radical proposition. Certainly memory can be prevented or destroyed by chemicals which inhibit protein formation.

But memory, like a filing system, comprises three functions: entering the material, storing it, and recall. And as anyone with a filing system knows, finding the information is a good deal more difficult than storing it. Even if memory turns out to be based on specific proteins, the question of how data is extracted on demand will need answering. Most cases of "loss of memory" are due to failures of the recall mechanism. The fact that after a blow on the head memory returns in the reverse order to that in which it was laid down also is hard to explain. In old age, on the other hand, we retain and recall childhood memories efficiently, but fail to enter new memories. I suspect that memory may prove more difficult to explain than many scientists expect.[9]

WHILE THE BIOCHEMISTS I have talked with are rather cock-a-hoop about all this, electrical theories of memory have also received a shot in the arm, thanks to a development in quite another field: the hologram.[10] A hologram is a photograph taken with the special kind of light which a laser emits. The negative shows only a pattern of light and dark areas, but projected on to a screen with another laser light-source, the original picture reappears. But it has this curious feature: if

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a small part is cut from the negative and projected, the whole picture is still seen, though with reduced definition. Every part of the negative carries information from the whole picture.

Psychologists at once noticed the similarity between this phenomenon and the performance of Lashley's rats: removing part of the brain reduced performance all round, instead of eliminating some specific part of it. It was soon shown, theoretically, that a nerve network could serve as the basis of a hologram. On this system, a memory could be recovered by simply reversing the process which entered it. Such a system would seem better adapted for registering images (as against abstract ideas, figures, etc.), than a chemical memory. My guess here is that both systems—electrical and chemical—will be found to interlock and be mutually dependent.

Once psychologists can control and regulate memory, they believe they will have a tool which will in turn open up the further secrets of mental activity.

The Recalcitrant Rat

WHILE THE NEUROLOGISTS have been making encouraging progress in understanding the detailed activity of the brain, at the level of its most basic units, it has been the task of psychologists to build the bridge from the other end, by analysing the organism's behaviour in terms of underlying processes. It must regretfully be said that, by and large, they have been much less successful. It is becoming clear that this has been largely due to the heresy known as Behaviourism, a doctrine which is beginning to look as wrong-headed as the phlogiston theory of combustion. Now they are painfully climbing back to reality, by performing experiments which demonstrate the truth that the brain is the sophisticated kind of organ that everyone already knows it is.

There have always been, to be sure, psychologists who stressed the importance of dealing with the total activity of the organism. (The Gestalt school was far from being the first to take this line). But the increasing trend towards objective, indeed mechanistic, explanations favoured Behaviourism, and far more time and money (not to mention rats) have been squandered on behaviourist experiments than on all other approaches put together. Initially, the impetus was practical: since we can't know what goes on inside "the black box", let us simply try to see how the input correlates with output. But before long, this self-denying ordinance became an article of belief. The brain was regarded as the simplest kind of telephone exchange, connecting stimulus to response. To give colour to this belief, it was necessary to put an animal in a box (the famous "Skinner box", named for Burrhus Skinner, dean of living behaviourists) where it *could* only receive one simple stimulus, and give only one simple response. This was like feeding a computer sums in simple addition and concluding that simple addition was all it could do. Even so, the rats often showed that their repertoire was wider, by drawing clues from the presence of the experimenter, and finding other responses (such as refusing to play). The perversity of the Behaviourists appears almost incredible to the layman.

Thus it was said that rats learn to run a maze not by making some kind of insightful mental map of it, but merely by memorising the sequence of muscular movements they have made. To prove this they made a maze filled with water, expecting that the rats which had learned to run the maze in the dry state, would be unable to swim through it. To their chagrin, the rats swam to their reward with no trouble at all! Unconvinced, the experimenters severed leg muscles—and the rats rolled and flopped to their goal. Still unconvinced, they intervened in their brains—the rats staggered drunkenly, but in the right direction.

Moreover, it became clear that the rats were intelligently using incidental clues, such as the position of the light-source in the laboratory, to orient themselves. The most convincing demonstration of rattish insight I have seen is one in which the rat has to climb a series of ladders, cross a drawbridge and even swing on a trapeze to reach its reward. When it has learned to do all this, the experimenter moves one of the ladders so that there is now a much shorter route to the goal. The rat comes in and starts for the bottom of the first ladder, as usual—pauses and looks in an astonished manner at the new set-up, shrugs its shoulders —and unhesitatingly takes the new and shorter route.

ONE THING WHICH cybernetics has taught us about the brain is that it does not simply make

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a plan and then put it into execution. It constantly monitors the performance and revises the plan accordingly, just as a computer-controlled spacecraft's attitude is monitored. And it does this about ten times every second. Even in so simple an action as picking up a glass of water, the approach of the hand is observed and error corrected, as we can see in the case of Parkinsonism patients, whose tremor results from over-corrections. And in each of these constantly reissued plans, all the data is taken into consideration (consider how easily we revise movements under water to allow for the viscosity of the water), and there is a constant comparison with relevant memories and with emotional loadings: we stop our plan to pick up the glass because we see a wasp in it. At any point the plan can be suspended if something more urgent comes up.

This sort of analysis obviously allows no room for the mechanistic "conditioned reflex" type of theory.

The Excluded Middle

THE BELATED DISCOVERY that the brain is quite sophisticated is being given respectability by experiments which seem crass to the layman. Thus it is reported that a person looks more frequently at a window behind which a constantly changing series of pictures is shown, than at one which shows the same picture all the time. Or again, a hen, trained to take a seed directly in front, rather than one lying to the right, is next presented with a seed in front and one to the left. Behaviourism says it will now take the seed in front, having learned this movement; anti-Behaviourism says it will take the leftmost seed, having analysed the situation in relative, not absolute terms. Needless to add, it in fact takes the left seed. Perhaps the nadir of vapidity was reached by experiments in which facial movements, such as frowning, were noted in the delivery room of a maternity hospital. It was discovered that women having their second babies frowned less than those having their first, but that no clue to their feelings could be gathered from their noses. Finally the experimenters managed to jam some of the women in the door as they entered. Frowning reached a peak when this occurred. End of experiment. As one famous experimental psychologist, E. G. Boring, observed,

> Psychology first lost its soul, then it lost its mind, and then it lost consciousness, but it still has behaviour of a kind . . .

While useful, if seldom spectacular, work has been done in other fields—such as development of the child, perception, and personality studies in the field of central brain action, the position remains lamentable.[11]

What psychology needs at present is a new theory which will link the psychology with the neurology of central brain function, and attempts are at last being made to supply this.[12] I believe that some of the difficulty encountered comes from insufficient thought about the nature of explanation. This is a thorny subject but, to indicate why, let me attempt an analogy. One way to describe a football match is to specify the position of every player and of the ball throughout the match, and a film can do this. But if we do not want or have not time to go into so much detail, we can simply list the goals scored and describe the main offensive and defensive plays, as a newspaper reporter might. Still more generally, we can just say: Spurs beat Wolves, or Giants beat Green Bay Packers. Yet more generally, we can say: Spurs or the Giants won the cup or the title. All these are legitimate levels of description. Applying this to the brain, we may say that the neurologist is concerned with the first two levels: the behaviour of cells and cell-groups. The psychologist is concerned with the last two levels. But the brain being more complex than football, there are not one but several missing stages between.

In short, we need concepts with which to describe mental activity at levels more general than the cellular, less general than overt behaviour. Psychology has made surprisingly

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[11] Many current experiments suggest intellectual bankruptcy. One psychologist photographed the faces of his girl students when he showed them rats being decapitated, pornographic pictures, skin diseases and the like, and reported that they looked startled. Improving on this, he plunged their hands into hot excrement, disembowelled animals, etc. One feels that Freud would have had a word for it, and it wouldn't have been "research."

[12] For instance, Blum's model, which centres on explaining how the brain selects one stimulus as especially important, or one plan as especially worthwhile: in G. S. Blum, *A Model of the Mind* (1961). Or the *TOTE* (Test-Operate-Test-Exit) model of G. A. Miller, E. Galanter and K. Pribram, in *Plans and the Structure of Behaviour* (1960).

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few attempts to supply this lack, and most of what it has done has been descriptive rather than explanatory. Much has been written about attitudes, sentiments, motives and so forth, without throwing any light on the dynamics of the mind. Freud's great achievement was to evolve a set of concepts closely related to people's functional problems. Though Freud is rather out of favour today, it should be stressed that concepts he popularised—ego, displacement, rationalisation, latency, repression, fixation, transference, neurosis, cathexis, abreaction, etc—have become part of the language of psychology and many of them are now employed routinely even by ardent Behaviourists. The relative lack of success of Freud's therapy does not make his analysis of the mind incorrect, any more than the failure of cancer experts to cure cancer makes their biochemical findings valueless.

Freud is widely thought of as a clinician, entirely concerned with mental pathology as it emerges on the couch. It is forgotten that he always maintained that the concepts of psychoanalysis must be rooted in neurological theory, and that he put forward, as long ago as 1895, a neurological theory which still makes very good sense today. The strange thing is that so little has been done to quantify and formalise the insights he derived from his acute observations, though the difficulty of experimentation in a field where human beings, rather than animals, must be used is certainly a major factor.

So What?

IF, IN THE NEXT fifty years or so, we arrive at an understanding of the brain in the sense of filling in the missing levels in the hierarchy, will this have any important effect on mankind, supposing mankind is still there? In particular, the humanist may ask, will it help us to eliminate war, torture, oppression, power-seeking or even just plain folly? In his book *The Ghost in The Machine* (1964), Arthur Koestler has argued, on the basis of a suggestion by Professor Paul MacLean, that the hypertrophy of the cerebral cortex has destroyed its balance with the older parts of the brain. Thus it comes about, he suggests, that our reason presses forward with plans which seem desirable, despite the protests of our sympathetic emotions. Yet man's greatest achievements are due to his ability to ignore short-term costs in order to obtain long-term gains. The climber (good) who conquers the peak ignoring his frostbite and exhaustion is philosophically comparable with the politician (bad) who, though disturbed by the screams, tortures his victim to obtain the information he believes he needs to attain his larger aim. Thus it seems improbable that we could eliminate the abuses of intellect without also eliminating its uses.

One could even advance just the opposite argument: for instance, that the polluters who seek short-term gains and close their eyes to long-term losses, are motivated by old-brain emotions (greed, sex disguised as power, etc.,) and they ignore their cortex which tells them that what they do is wrong and also stupid. On this basis, a *greater* development of the cortex is what we should hope for. (This of course was the Victorian and rationalist belief: Reason conquers the Beast.) Others would say that human misbehaviour is due primarily to emotional frustrations and distortions, rather than to some evolutionary imbalance.

The truth is, we already have enough knowledge of how personality distortion is caused—of the origins of sadism, aggression and power-seeking—to make a start on minimising it, if we would. It is the political horse-sense which is lacking. Brain research may give us some short cuts, such as an "anti-aggression pill", but these will pose as many problems as they solve, and are as likely to be misused as used aright.

What we can perhaps hope for, but with no assurance it will come, is chemical knowledge which will enable us swiftly to undo the wrongly-made connections in the brain, and let the distorted personality make a new attempt at development; though this, too, could be misused and probably would be.

This notion brings me to another question which dogs the humanist: if the brain does turn out to be a marvellous machine, is man faced with loss of his identity? There are already many signs of such a fear: they lie behind the hot denials that computers can think, and the distrust of drugs which might reform personality, so well argued in Anthony Burgess's novel *The Clockwork Orange* (1962). I believe these fears will grow, during the next half century, and there may well be a widespread sense of despair and futility, as there is in some quarters already.

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I also believe this fear to be unjustified and irrational, for two main reasons. First, as Hegel is said to have taught us, problems change in quality as they change in scale. At new orders of complexity, new properties emerge. One stick is just a stick, but three sticks can be a triangle. Now the human brain, even the amphibian brain, is many orders of magnitude more complex than any computer we are likely to build. It thus has unique properties. Moreover, every living brain is hand-programmed, and differs from every other brain: indeed it is actually wired differently. If I am a machine, I am certainly a unique one.

The second reason is rather more profound. Nothing in the whole of brain research undertakes to account for consciousness or emotion. If we can find in the brain a mechanism which responds say, to green light, we are no nearer understanding why it is seen as green. Nor can we explain why stimulating the pleasure-centre causes pleasure, and why stimulating pain nerves causes pain. Still less can we explain why a complex stimulus like an orchestral symphony causes the peculiar excitement it does. Above all, we cannot account for consciousness in the sense of self-consciousness. How do I know that I know? Descartes was wrong in saying: *Cogito ergo sum.* Any computer can say as much. It is because I think that I think that I know that I am. And it is that which research does not even begin to explain.

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John Weightman

A Visit to Lévi-Strauss

AFTER TRANSLATING Claude Lévi-Strauss's prose, off and on, for some three-and-a-half years, we were going to meet the famous Structuralist for the first time. To call upon an author one has struggled with for so long can be an eerie experience. If he has a difficult, and strongly personal, style, as is the case with Lévi-Strauss, the translator has laboured over every paragraph, turning it this way and that in the always hopeless endeavour to be faithful to sound and sense, so that he feels absolutely familiar with the author's mental processes, even if he cannot be sure of always having fully understood them. But there may be a gap between the man as writer and the man as he exists in everyday life. Would Lévi-Strauss turn out to be as imperiously intellectual, as dauntingly abstruse, as he is in his books? I rather hoped not, because I was afraid I might be unable to follow his arguments orally, since I sometimes find them difficult enough to puzzle out in their written form. On the other hand, I would be disappointed if he did not give the impression of a great brain digesting the phenomena of the universe. I have a kind of romanticism of the intellect which makes Lévi-Strauss particularly appealing to me. No one, since the early Sartre or Simone Weil, has produced the same bracing effect of taking serious reflection as the primary function of man. How different from that other famous contemporary French figure, Teilhard de Chardin, whose apparent intellectualism is such a transparent tissue of wishful thinking!

EVEN IF, LIKE MYSELF, one has no specialist knowledge of anthropology, it is easy enough to understand in very general terms what Lévi-Strauss is about, since he has published a kind of autobiography (*Tristes Tropiques*) and is given to making autobiographical remarks even in the middle of the most austere passages of reasoning. His motive force is an intense desire to explain human behaviour, and the key he has found—after the dialectical materialism of Marx, the psychology of Freud, the subject/object tensions of Sartre, etc.—is that man is a pattern-making being, whose social organisations, moral attitudes and verbal and physical practices are often less important because of their content than because of their form. Structuralism, as I understand it from his writings, means that man must inevitably think in terms of forms, even when those forms are created and perceived only by the unconscious. Or, to put it more definitely, there is often a hidden, fundamental form behind the superficial form and content that the conscious mind is aware of.

At the moment, Lévi-Strauss is trying to prove this in an immense four-volume analysis (*Mythologiques*) of certain Indian myths of South America, which he sees as illustrating patterns of polarities between concepts such as the raw and the cooked, the wet and the dry, the high and the low, nature and culture, and so on. The principle is clear. If Lévi-Strauss's analyses are correct, the South American Indians reacted to the problems of living and to the mysteries of the universe by inventing certain myths which, in addition to the stories they tell, contain patterns of perception arranged in ways that are profoundly satisfying to the human psyche and are a pre-figuration of scientific thought. All the processes of modern intellectualism are therefore inherent in the savage mind, and humanity is everywhere the same under the bewildering variety of attitudes and customs. But the difficulty arises in following the subtleties of Lévi-Strauss's reasoning. Is his analysis valid, or is it a huge Parisian philosophical mirage that he is imposing on a complex body of material? I personally hope it is valid, but even if it weren't, it would still be an extraordinarily exciting intellectual exercise.

THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT was to ask him if he had any comments on the typescript of the translation of Volume II (*From Honey to Ashes*) that my wife and I had recently finished, and incidentally to enquire

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what he thought about the English reaction to Volume I (*The Raw and The Cooked*), which appeared here some months ago[1] and has been rather gingerly reviewed in various places. Lévi-Strauss has achieved world celebrity as a "fashionable" name, but it is difficult to know how many people have actually read his works, or how far his fellow-anthropologists take him seriously. Some of them seem to ignore him entirely; others may refer to him as "great", and then go on to reject the essential points of his thesis. I had culled a number of objections from the reviews, as well as from English books about Lévi-Strauss, particularly the chapter on him in G. S. Kirk's very recent volume, *Myth, Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures.* It seemed fair to ask for some interim comment on these, although Lévi-Strauss states, in *From Honey to Ashes,* that he will defer replying systematically to criticism until he has completed the fourth and final volume of *Mythologiques,* on which he is now working.

THERE IS NOTHING at all modern about the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie sociale,* where M. Lévi-Strauss has his office. It is a series of rooms up two flights of stone stairs in an old building which is part of the Sorbonne complex, and it has the shabby 19th-century dignity I have always associated with the French university. A group of young people, conversing aimlessly with the air of disciples in repose, indicated which passage to take. The Professor, looking very much like his photographs but rather more drawn and tired, came to meet us with traditional French courtesy and ushered us into his sanctum. He was clearly not given to small talk. Once we had sat down, there was a silence until we showed readiness to embark upon the business of the meeting.

But as soon as he started to speak, it was obvious that he was the man of his books, because the sentences flowed and the images merged one into another as they do in his writings. He seemed totally absorbed in the structure of his thought, from which he had emerged only for a moment to bid us a polite welcome. It was strange to reflect that this soft-spoken, utterly literate person, the very embodiment of the French conceptualising mind, should have devoted so many years of his life to the disentangling of Indian tales about cannibalism, snake-penises, tapir-seducers, toothed vaginas, excretions, and the lamentable habits of that most inelegant fowl, the bunia bird. How wonderful that the intellect can function serenely in all contexts!

I BEGAN BY SAYING that some reviewers had been perplexed by the general drift of *The Raw and the Cooked.* Could he explain briefly the aim of the four volumes of *Mythologiques*? His reply was that he hoped, quite simply, to describe the functioning of an American system of myths, more or less in the manner in which a linguist might describe a language.

This, of course, has to be interpreted as meaning not that he is describing the content of the myths—as I have already said, content is not his prime interest—but that he is working out the hidden patterns of intellectual polarities which are modified according to certain rules, as a given myth varies from version to version. I take him to be saying that there is a grammar of concealed intellectualisms that he is elucidating.

But why, if he is merely giving a description, should *The Raw and the Cooked* and *From Honey to Ashes* be composed on a musical analogy, with overtures, rondos, variations, etc? And why does he state in these books that they themselves are "super-myths about myths"? If one pursued this line of thought, would one not arrive at the conclusion that all discourse is myth?

He seemed prepared to admit this. In a sense, the South American myths, like music, express nothing but themselves, and he would give a further justification of the musical analogy in the finale of Volume IV, which he was now revising and which would be twice as long as any of the preceding volumes. Moreover, even in rational discourse, we use language without understanding how it functions, (I can follow this, if it means that all understanding necessarily contains a mass of non-understanding; rational explanation, for instance, is the application of an instinctively and unconsciously accepted system of structures to some other system of structures.) He himself, he added, had chosen to study a corpus of American myths and had produced a certain reaction to it; so—and the speech ended with a typically tantalising poetico-philosophical formula which has to be translated literally—"By conferring the character of object on the myth, I have demonstrated the mythic character of the object".

THIS WAS MY CUE to say that most English and American critics complain about the

[1] Published by Jonathan Cape (London) and Harper & Row (New York).

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impossibility of verifying his theories scientifically.[2] Here he made the gesture of brushing away a fly. Had he not said again and again that he was not a scientist, that his speculations were merely preliminary sketches for something that would be done much more accurately in the future. All the so-called social sciences are, in fact, pre-scientific.

In that case, would it not have been better to avoid the term "social sciences" or *sciences humaines,* as they are called in France? Yes, no doubt.

But if, as yet, there is no possibility of scientific verification in these matters, how is one to distinguish between truth and falsehood?

There are two criteria. Probability, in the first place; if a theory throws light on what previously appeared confused or incoherent—and this is the case with the South American myths—the chances are that it contains at least an element of truth. Secondly, a unified solution. If a hypothesis explains a number of apparently disparate facts by means of a single principle, it is moving in the direction of science.

SOME READERS of Lévi-Strauss find it difficult to believe that the actual content of the myth-stories as social or psychological tales should be less important than the structural polarities embedded in the narratives. Structuralism lays more stress on form than on content, and this is a stumbling-block to its appreciation by the empirically-minded English. What had he to say to that?

The variations in the myth-stories are subject to a double determinism (*a*) the internal dynamism of the mythic discourse, (*b*) the external determinism of the social, geographical, climatic, etc. infra-structures. He had never underestimated the latter—"I remain a Durckheimian"—but on the contrary had always linked up their operation with the variations in the structural polarities.

However, he was convinced of the difficulty of separating content from form, because form is often the content of the next synthesis.

Kirk, in particular, expresses surprise at the fact that Lévi-Strauss should found his explanation on a *choice* of myths from a given area, and not from the total body of myths. If the analyst chooses, is he not looking primarily for material which will support his hypothesis?

Here, for the first time, Lévi-Strauss expressed indignation. It seemed to him that Professor Kirk, in reading the French text, had confused the term for "ant-hill" with the term for "ant-eater", and had given other proofs that he was not following the argument. It makes no sense to ask for the total body of myths, which exist, have existed and will exist in endless variations in illiterate societies; one might as well ask for the total forms of a language, that is, for infinity. All the structural analyst can do is to take certain myths and see if he can reduce them to an intelligible system; he might well have taken another set and arrived at similar conclusions.

Kirk also jibs at Lévi-Strauss's apparently dogmatic assertion that the analyst should always take a given narrative literally in all its details, even though it may exist only in a defective transcription from a doubtful informant. It seemed to me that Kirk had a point. Why take as an absolute a narrative that is subject to all the accidents of transmission and translation?

But Lévi-Strauss launched forth into a beautiful improvisation on the nature of myth in a purely oral society. Moulding the air with his cupped hands, he explained how the different versions are eroded and perfected by repetitions so that they become expressions of the collective mind. A myth is only a myth when it is finally the embodiment of a collective commonplace, and as such it must be correct in all its details.

This did not strike me as being a direct answer to the question, so I objected that it supposed a kind of infallibility in the native speakers. Did he believe that the human mind, in that sense, could not make mistakes?

Let us say, he answered, that the *unconscious* cannot make mistakes; or, more precisely, that if an error occurs in one part of the mythic system, it is bound to produce a compensatory error in some other part, just as in a language a modification of a phoneme in one place necessarily produces a compensatory modification elsewhere.

PERHAPS THERE WAS STILL a slight look of incredulity on my face because he went on to say that, of course, in trying to elucidate these matters in his books, he made free, and perhaps imprudent, use of the sort of philosophical language which is common to all members of the Parisian intelligentsia, but that he did not attach any great importance to it. It was just an *échafaudage,* a scaffolding that

[2] See the critique by Professor Clifford Geertz, "The Cerebral Savage" (ENCOUNTER, April 1967).

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he ran up here and there as a provisional explanation. Time would tell whether, by and large, he had produced an interpretation of the myths that would appear acceptable to the Indians themselves.

But surely, I interjected, his interpretation was not addressed to the Indians, had nothing to do with them as such and was expressed in a vocabulary that they could never understand. It was a theory put forward in purely European terms within the European intellectual context.

At this, he pointed with a smile to a photograph on the wall which showed a half-naked Indian in the jungle puzzling over the French edition of *La pensée sauvage,* and then added more seriously that Dolmatoff had recently published a book consisting of recorded discussions about myths with a Tucano Indian, which proved that a native was capable of grasping their underlying philosophy. The native's explanations were not couched in the same terms as his own, but they tended in a similar direction and were thus a guarantee that the Structuralist reading was not a pure invention.

JUNGLE SCENE
(after a photograph given to us by Claude Lévi-Strauss)

SINCE LEVI-STRAUSS himself had referred to Parisian philosophical language and had also mentioned the collective unconscious, it seemed appropriate to ask him how he saw himself in relation to his French contemporaries. To a foreign observer he is bound to appear as the most important and the most central of the Structuralists. His emphasis on the linguistic analogy, his interest in form rather than in content, his stressing of collective determinisms rather than of individual choice, are all characteristic, for instance, of the post-Existentialist "New Novel", as well as of contemporary criticism and contemporary social reflection. There is, at the moment, a curious intellectual atmosphere in which individualism is played down (often by rather flamboyant and dogmatic individuals), the importance of the subject is denied, characters as such are banished from fiction and attention is concentrated on the creation of structures.

Was he conscious of being at the centre of this movement? What did he think of his younger contemporaries, of the "New Novelists", for instance?

No, he was not at all conscious of being at the centre of a movement, and in fact he strongly objected to being associated with certain so-called Structuralists. Volume IV of *Mythologiques* would contain a denunciation of what he had dubbed *le structuralisme-fiction* on the analogy of science-fiction. As for the New Novel, he had tried to read one book by Robbe-Grillet, *La Modification*—no, I pointed out, *La Modification* is by Michel Butor—all right, the novel, whether by Robbe-Grillet or by Butor, about a train-journey between Paris and Rome, but he had given it up because, when the narrator got as far as Dijon, there was no mention of the countryside, "one of the most beautiful in France," and so "the book dropped from my hands". It is clear, then, that Lévi-Strauss is far from being an enthusiastic reader of the literature which might be thought to have some connection with him. No doubt, this is the usual phenomenon of a climate of opinion appearing fairly coherent when seen from a distance, but breaking up into mutual indifference or antagonism at close quarters. It may well be, of course, that Robbe-Grillet and Butor have not read Lévi-Strauss either, and that their common emphasis on form is a collective mood which a later social analyst may be able to clarify.

The only contemporary French writer Lévi-Strauss expressed approval of was Roland Barthes, whose recent book on Balzac, *S/Z,* he had read with interest. He didn't agree with the results of Barthes' analysis, but thought that the method was stimulating.

Barthes, as it happens, is one of the strongest proponents of the view not only that characters in fiction are obsolete but also that there is no character or identity of the writer, in the old sense. I have heard him say in a lecture that the name, Balzac, for instance, is just a convenient, shorthand term for the indefinable multifarious "one" who wrote the

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Balzac books. I asked Lévi-Strauss if he shared this opinion about the indefiniteness of the subject. Did he believe that the South American myths had been composed by individuals or had emerged imperceptibly from the collective background? Did he see any parallels between myth-creation in illiterate, primitive societies and literature in evolved societies?

He repeated that a myth only came into its own when it had become a collective creation, and therefore that the question of its individual genesis was unimportant, even if it were soluble, which it was not. Clearly individual personalities are more definite in evolved societies, but even so. . . He did not feel that "he" had written his own books. "I am the place in which something has occurred."

But did he not have personal feelings about his books? In what order, for instance, would he suggest that a new reader should take them, in order to be initiated into his thought?

At this, he threw up his hands. He hadn't the slightest idea; he felt that his completed works were very remote from him, and in fact he wasn't sure that he himself could really understand them any more.

THIS UNCERTAINTY seemed to take us right back to the ancient philosophical problem of the identity of the subject living in the flux of time, which makes even Structuralism appear relatively easy.

Casting about for a foothold, I remarked that the playing-down of the subject is one of the chief differences between Existentialism and Structuralism. The latter shifts the emphasis from the individual mind to the human mind, which is taken almost as a concrete reality existing independently of individuals, presumably in the perpetually latent universe of language, whereas Existentialism, at least in Sartre's early writings, laid great stress on personal exercise of the will and thus led to a philosophy of political commitment. Structuralism, because it tends to see phenomena as expressions of the collective unconscious, has been accused of encouraging social passivity or fatalism. Did Lévi-Strauss think this was so? Could one say that Structuralism would appeal more to a contemplative temperament (supposing it were legitimate to speak of individual temperaments) and Existentialism more to the activist type?

Yes, perhaps. But it was above all a question of different intellectual approaches. Existentialism and Structuralism could be considered as complementary ways of looking at things, and here he resorted to the image of the eye and the microscope, already used in *The Raw and the Cooked*. Any fragment of the universe can be seen according to a multiplicity of focusings: a drop of water, for instance, is a drop of water, or a home for microbes, or a conglomeration of molecules, or a collection of particles. If you are struggling to make a better world, you may grasp reality in one way; if you are trying to understand the underlying patterns, you may approach it in another way. He had no quarrel with the Existentialists, it was they who sought quarrels with him!

This excellent ecumenical note having been struck, it was time to take our leave. We thanked the professor for his forbearance, and he courteously accompanied us to the staircase.

NEXT MORNING, when we were comparing notes about all this over our morning coffee at the Dôme, who should amble past and turn up into the Boulevard Raspail but Sartre? Deep in conversation, oblivious to everything around him, his endearing face slightly tilted up in an unseeing stare, he was arm in arm with a dark young lady, no doubt the person who, if accounts are correct, is his adopted daughter according to culture and his wife according to nature (another example of differences in focusing). I must be as sentimental about French writers as some other people are about Royalty, because it seemed very moving, after just conversing with the chief Structuralist, to see the chief Existentialist go by in full torrent of discourse. Perhaps we all live all the time in myth.

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earle birney

Six Poems

1984 minus 14 & counting at u of waterloo ontario

after the calorestimated meal
in the male hall
they walk back to the compulibratories
keeping to the asphalt paths
conceived by the landtects

sometimes a thousand are in forward motion
engimechs the plureality at 0826 hrs
in pairs with crewcuts hands by flanks
& slightly crooked below rainbreakers (yellow)
with *U of W* on back ENGINEERS on upper sleeve
(L) & black number upper R

since none of this is actually required by deans
nor the gloves (black) hushpuppies (grey)
nor absence of headcover & expressions
what is felt is communiternity a campustalt

the mathamen cruts not quite so short
are sometimes grouped in 3s
but otherwise all waterloobed:
hands by flanks & slightly . . . (yellow) . . .
MATHS on . . . black . . . grey . . . absence
almost as striking—communalove at least

a few artsies still (terminal class of '74)
midearburns / 1 in 10 by arrangement
dress the same of course
but some carry briefcases in R hand
wear their ARTS upon their sleeves
& walk alone

A small port in the Outer Fijis

Knotheaded men in seaboots all the way from Hokkaido
crowded on a moored fishtank built like a tug
They've been catching tuna for rice
& sharks & marlin for fun, insurance, & the swords
& tails drying in the rigging now
Down the scale-slippery wharf
tippytoe
come the new nobility of Fiji:
Mr. Sato, Chief of Cannery, & his Lady
to greet the Trawler Chieftain, Capt. Moto
& bear him to their hill villa for ceremonial
rum & saki with the Aussie Prince of Port
& the New Zild Lord of Fishmeal, Ratas all.
The Captain Hero will sing them his voyage:
a full catch unloaded at Pango

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but much spoiled & sold for catfood
The present cargo in fine condition but nearly lost
by confiscation when discovered inside Tonga's limits
But they cut their lines in time & said they'd come
for cocos & water. Tuna scarcer . . . Korean competition . . .

Meantime the sweaty sailors heave great fish
one by one from hold to deck to wharf to truck
Some are hoping there'll be time before sailing back
to find a Yankee beer & even a halfcaste schoolgirl
at the one whorehouse up the one street

The British are all back in Suva plotting
to set Fiji free
The Indians are keeping the shops
& procreating

There are no Fijians in view.

a small faculty stag for the visiting poet

but a large quantity of brandy
on whisky
on sherry

At one table's end the Necessary Dean
has broken out cigars
At the other the Oxonian Canon
splotchfaced now
is putting us all down with naughty quotes
from Persius we're too slow to get
—except the Czech professor & the Hungarian
who dig everything
so civilised they're savage with disappointment
in us all & no doubt saying so this moment
safely across my chest in at least 2 languages

somewhere in the smoke the Librarian
is heard toasting the Cummunwealth
& feck the Yenks
The Padre winces & gradually
like Yahweh in the Zohar withdraws his presence
leaving behind that vacuum of Evil
which is us

The Physics Department's chief cultural exhibit
also a very anthropologetical Native Son
have just asked me unanswerable questions
simultaneously from across the table

I am the dead eye of this word-typhoon
I am the fraudulent word-doctor
stripped to dumbness by their tribal ritual
I am neither civilised nor savage but also Necessary
grinning
& stoned
& desolate

Australia, 1968

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toronto march

7.59 a.m.
despite the iced entrenchments
in the ravines
& the black roots of barricades
(the tires are whining over)
& the white flak descending
outside my window—
i know the revolution
is flowering
somewhere
or how could they be hauling captives
to the markets? (in Paris this moment
battalions of defiant *muguet*
are being sold in the streets
& the radio says Vancouver
has been infiltrated)
some day even here the rebels—

the patient will be rescued
let us keep pistils taut
powder dry
only buds will explode
scent will be used . . .

8 a.m. *& now the latest news*
. . . i'd forgotten

it's only a vegetable revolution

The Marriage

now we've agreed
to be each other's house
any tent will do us

we'll pitch on this beach
dig the butterclams
make alderhooks for seaperch
eat the berries by the spring

in time we'll find a way perhaps
to use the driftwood
to keep the tides
from ebbing every day

Christchurch, N. Z.

I have just flown 1100 miles from Australia
& landed in a Victorian bedroom
They have sent up cindered muttonchops
There is an elderly reporter in my room
with pince nez He wants to know
why I have sideburns
& if I dont think being patronised
by the Canada Council isnt dangerous
for my art or dont I feel I need to suffer?
In stone outside my window Capt. Scott
is nobly freezing to death near the South Pole
Suddenly I know the reporter is right
Sideburns have been sapping my strength

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NOTES & TOPICS

François Mauriac

IN FEBRUARY, 1939, when Mauriac had already been at the top of the tree for a good many years and Jean-Paul Sartre himself still had a very long way to go, Sartre took a savage swipe at the novelist. "God", he said, "is not an artist; nor is M. Mauriac. . . ." Whatever Mauriac's final rating, nothing could have been further from the truth. He was an artist to his finger-tips and one of the most versatile writers of our time: poet, novelist, playwright, biographer, autobiographer, hagiographer, critic, essayist, author of religious treatises and a mass of miscellaneous writings who eventually became, like Sartre, a fierce political commentator.

John Weightman has suggested that there were at least two Mauriacs: "the world-famous novelist and the Parisian polemicist". I feel some doubts about the division. Mauriac was never a conformist; he was a born rebel; and there is a world of difference between the rebel and the revolutionary. The revolutionary's one idea is to make a clean sweep of the existing order even when he has nothing, or nothing sensible, to offer in its place. That is the last thing the rebel wants. His vocation is a permanent state of opposition. He enjoys tilting at the existing order without too much discomfort to himself. If there were a dramatic improvement in it, if people really did what he said, it would spoil all the fun; if it disappeared life would probably become extremely uncomfortable for him.

The rebel usually tries to extend his opposition to as many walks of life as he can. He always has his finger not on the trigger, but on the spanner, ready to send it whistling into a fresh set of works and delighting in the peculiar grinding noises it makes when it gets there. He does not care for political factions and is happy to turn up on what people regard for him as the wrong side. For me, therefore, there is one Mauriac who is all of a piece. It seems to me to be quite natural that the man who delivered a tremendous onslaught on the provincial bourgeoisie in his novels should have supported the Spanish republicans against Franco, rejected the feeble Pétain, joyfully thrown in his lot with the *Résistance,* and since politics offers considerable scope for the rebel should have continued in much the same vein for the rest of his life. Nor is it surprising that he became an ardent admirer of de Gaulle—another rebel in his own way with whom, temperamentally, Mauriac obviously had a good deal in common.

MAURIAC, as we all know, came of a prosperous middle-class land-owning family. He used to lament the fact that he had never known his father who died when he was only twenty months old. Yet it was the religious differences between father and mother which gave the rebel his first cue.

> My irreligious father and my mother, who was a devout Catholic, have always been at odds with one another inside me. I have always been conscious of a leaning towards, a tenderness for all that my father fought against, and, at the same time, of sudden fits of anger at everything my mother loved and venerated.

He is even more forthright in another place. The sight of well-known converts like Jacques Maritain and Ernest Psichari filled him with envy. They were people for whom Catholicism had been a free choice. "My own drama", he said, "lies in the fact that I was born into it; I did not choose it; this religion was imposed on me at birth."

"Imposed" is a decidedly strong word in its present context. The word "drama" is still more revealing. The sentence comes from a little book called *Dieu et Mammon.* Mauriac wrote it to defend himself against charges of an undue preoccupation with sexual relations in his novels. It shows that the conflict between sacred and profane—this is his meaning of "drama"—was one of the main sources of his inspiration, as it was of André Gide's.

Although Mauriac remained an unswervingly orthodox Catholic all his life, there were plenty of clashes with his starchier co-religionists, and they were not confined to arguments about the sexuality of the novels. In another religious work, provocatively entitled *La Pierre d'Achoppement,* he speaks of his "antipathy" to theology and goes on to remark that theological arguments are always a danger to his faith. For him religion was essentially an *experience,* and that is where the novelist and the man of religion join hands.

Mauriac was fortunate in his beginnings. The prosperity of the family meant that there was no need for him to take a job in order to earn his living; he was free to become a full-time writer from the start. What is more,

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the society in which he was born and bred provided the rebel with a sitting target; the *Landes* where those thrifty Gascons made their fortunes a perfect setting. In the novels provincial society appears outwardly staid and respectable and inwardly thoroughly corrupt. The land-owners pay lip-service to religion; their real religion is their social position, the cult of the family, their pines, their vines, their cash, and their lust.

The family is the centre piece in most of the novels. It presents a united front to the stranger. The reality is very different. "A taste for quarrelling is part of the family inheritance", says Louis, the odious protagonist of *Le Noeud de Vipères*. Even this is an understatement. The family is rent by every kind of feud; its members are frequently seething with hatred of one another. Parents force children to marry the wrong person, and in one case sell off a daughter to a rich and revolting old man, in order to bring two estates together with a hope of increasing the profits. Religious antagonisms are not excluded. Louis, like some of Mauriac's own relations, is an unbeliever who attacks the sham religion of other members of his family. "What I detested above everything", he says vindictively, "was this crude caricature of Christianity, this mediocre infusion of Christian life. I pretended to take it for an authentic representation of Christianity in order to have the right to hate it."

It is interesting to observe that the religious differences between Mauriac's own parents and his father's early death have left a particular mark on the novels. It is only occasionally that we find a family with both parents living. When we do, the Father is usually feeble, weak-minded, and ailing; the Mother a formidable matron, the strong woman who makes most men wilt. The Father manages, simply because he is the father and the official head of the family, to exercise a minimal restraint while he is there. When he succumbs to ill-health, does a bolt with another woman or, in one novel, blows his brains out as the curtain goes up, the Mother takes possession, turns into a monster who devours her children, breaks off the engagements of daughters and reduces sons to a state of neurotic subjection which provides fresh victims for the next generation of strong women.

The only characters who really win our sympathy are the youthful sinners itching to hop into bed with one another, or the young innocents pursued by some lecherous middle-aged female. The youthful sinners enjoy Mauriac's sympathy too. For he is not so much the Catholic novelist as the Catholic sex-novelist who is much more interested in seduction than conversion. His comments are just as outspoken as those on religion.

> Nothing can alter the fact that sin is the element of the man of letters.

It was all very well for moralists and philosophers to talk about describing sin "without connivance." It wouldn't work

> for the imaginative writer whose art consists of making visible, tangible and odorous a world filled with criminal delight—and of sanctity, too, as I am not unaware.

The afterthought on sanctity is amusing and clearly reflects the novelist's order of precedence. It is well illustrated by the account of a seduction in *Le Fleuve de Feu:*

> It was the delicious and desperate moment when two beings, though still making a pretence of resistance, know that they are lost. The abyss has not yet swallowed up their entwined limbs, but they are leaning so far out over its depth that they are sure that no power on earth or in heaven could snatch them back.

It is evident that there is a strong element of complicity here and that the religious factor heightens the sexiness.

The atmosphere of violence, which permeates the novels, is intensified by the landscape. Mauriac appears as a man who was deeply rooted, physically as well as socially and psychologically, in his province, whose roots thrust down into the very soil. He extracts a grim, dry, gritty poetry from what he calls "this silent empty country", "this land of cinders" or, in the last novel of all, "this arid anguished land with its bleeding pines". It is a country of pines and vines and sand whose inhabitants live in a perpetual state of tension, sniffing the air, glancing at the skies. They fear the torrid heat which brings the forest fires that destroy the precious pines and the storms which wreck the vines—both a threat to their cherished prosperity.

Mauriac's *Vie de Jean Racine* is probably the best biography of the dramatist that has ever been written because it comes closer than any other to giving us the feel of the man. What is much more important is that Racine was almost certainly the greatest single literary influence in Mauriac's novels. They had a good deal in common as writers. They both display the same ruthlessness, the same preoccupation with the family feud, with violence, with hatred, with formidable women, and show the same fondness for the word "prey", meaning the victim of a highly aggressive sexual pursuer. There is a family likeness, too, in the characters. Some of Mauriac's characters turn

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up or are mentioned in more than one novel, but that is not the real point. The majority of them reveal the same sort of psychological resemblances among themselves as Racine's. What is even more striking is the form. At their best Mauriac's novels possess the same brevity, the same tightness of structure, develop with something of the same certainty and pace as Racine's tragedies. It was when this influence was at its height in the 1920s that Mauriac produced what still seem to me to be his finest novels: *Le Baiser au Lépreux, Genitrix, Le Désert de l'Amour, Thérèse Desqueyroux, Destins* and (with reservations) *Le Noeud de Vipères.*

THIS BRINGS US TO THE CRISIS which took place at the beginning of the 1930s. It has been variously attributed to ill-health, conversion in the sense of a deepening of religious feeling, and attacks by pious busybodies on the sexiness of the novels. Whatever the reasons, there was a marked falling off in the novels that followed. There is a softening in some of the books of the novelist's attitude towards the family, fewer seductions and more conversions. The weaknesses became more pronounced after the War. Then, with the publication of *L'Agneau* in 1954, the novels came to a halt though other works continued with undiminished skill.

It is particularly sad that Mauriac should have died when he did. He not only made a remarkable come-back last year by producing at the age of eighty-three the best novel that he had written for over thirty years: he had signed a contract to write two more. *Un Adolescent d'autrefois* (recently translated into English as *Maltaverne*) contains all the familiar ingredients and one novel touch. The youthful hero beds his girl at home while the typical Mauriac mother is on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. This time there is no troubled conscience.

> I was conscious of my sin not as an offence but as a grace and that the worst thing that could have happened to me would have been for no woman to play a part in my life.

Was it, one wonders, the influence of the permissive society or Vatican II?

Any attempt to place a writer who has just died is even more of a problem than trying to place one who is still alive. Mauriac was a greatly gifted man who excelled in many fields. At the same time, we have to admit that his gifts as a novelist were limited. His world is a circumscribed world; he confines himself to one corner of society and one set of problems. He probes deeply, but does not possess the range or the weight which stamp a man as a master. The provisional verdict should perhaps be: a very distinguished novelist whose work may well outlast that of most of his contemporaries.

Martin Turnell

"A World at Peace"

International Commentary — By LOUIS J. HALLE

THE OBJECTIVE of responsible men everywhere, today, is that of building "a world at peace." But what does the phrase mean? Before a man sets about building a house he has to have in his mind a rather complete and detailed picture of the house he intends to build. With us, too, before we undertake to build "a world at peace" we had better have a mental picture of what such a world would be like, of what its shape would be, of how it would function.

The picture we form in our minds must be of something that can be built within the limitations of basic circumstances as they are and of the materials available to us. Just as no practical purpose would be served by planning a house constructed of candy-sticks and cobwebs, its foundations in the clouds, so no practical purpose would be served by picturing a world that enjoyed peace because its human inhabitants had all become angels. In suggesting certain elements that would have to enter into "a world at peace," then, I shall confine myself within the bounds of what I conceive to be possible for us as the limited human beings we are.

Neither "war" nor "peace" is the categorical state of being that the term, itself, implies. If

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"a world at peace" were simply a world in which organised military violence was not going on, then we could say that we were virtually living in such a world already. At the moment of writing, the only military violence going on anywhere, in Viet Nam and the Middle East, is local and limited. However, even if there were none at all for the moment, the world of our present would still be far from what we had in mind when we thought of "a world at peace." Clearly, by "peace" we mean something more than the mere lack of military violence at a particular moment. I cannot improve on what Thomas Hobbes wrote in *Leviathan:*

> FOR WAR consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting: but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known; and therefore the notion of *time*, is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

A few paragraphs further on he added:

> . . . in all times, kings, and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbours; which is a posture of war.

In Hobbes' terms, then, the world we live in today is not "a world at peace." The sovereign states of which it is composed are in the "posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; . . . and continual spies upon their neighbours; which is a posture of war."

THE CONDITION Hobbes identified as inherently a condition of war, which is the condition of our present world, is a matter of degree. It is a condition that may vary from mild to acute. It was more acute in the period from 1948 through 1962, when the tensions of the Cold War were at their greatest. It has been less acute since 1962, with the partial relaxation of Cold War tensions. It may become more acute again in the 1970s if the Sino-Soviet conflict continues to develop in intensity, or if the situation in the Middle East gets out of hand. In any case, it is the heavy war-clouds constantly over our heads, sometimes clearing slightly, sometimes darkening again, but always threatening us with stormy violence, which make it impossible for us to say we have achieved "a world at peace." It is this condition that we want to do away with when we adopt such a world as the proper objective of national and international policy. We should like to do away altogether and forever with this condition of living constantly under war-clouds. But if this is not an immediate possibility, then we must at least ameliorate this condition in the greatest degree possible; we must at least move in the direction of a permanent and total cure. Our problem, then, is to eliminate, or at least reduce to the greatest extent possible, the threat of organised military violence under which we constantly live.

TO BEGIN WITH the main limiting conditions we have to take account of, we should recognise, as belonging to the unchangeable nature of things, that conflict is constant and ubiquitous in human relations: conflict among individuals, conflict among groups, conflict among great and sovereign societies. There are conflicts of interest, conflicts of ideology, conflicts of temperament, conflicts arising out of inevitable misunderstanding among people of different cultural formation. Since this is a condition that we cannot change, our problem is not to do away with conflict but to domesticate it, to get it under control, to keep its conduct under rule, to keep its manifestations within safe and established limits. And this, too, is a matter of degree.

To be more specific, the problem is that of limiting conflict by limiting the ways in which it is conducted, and by limiting the means with which it is conducted. The ways and means of conducting conflict are the ways and means of exercising power. Therefore, the problem, more specifically, is that of limiting power, of domesticating power, of keeping the exercise of power within safe and established rules.

I include in the term "power," here, all the means by which men or societies try to get their way, by which they try to realise their respective wills in their conflicts with one another. Of all these means, the most dangerous is the use of physical violence. It is therefore the limitation of the use of physical violence that must concern us most.

Conflict, today, exists equally within national societies and among them. For the most part, however, it is under far better control within them than among them. Great Britain, Argentina, Japan, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, the

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United States—all these are organised societies within which a variety of conflicts are constantly raging; just as conflicts are constantly raging in the international society to which they belong. However, the situation remains the same as it was in the days when Hobbes regarded the international society as being in a continuous state of war, while he regarded the stable and properly organised national societies (or their 17th-century equivalents) as being in a state of peace. It is true that the difference is a difference of degree; but a difference of degree can be so great as to constitute a difference in kind. Hobbes would surely have agreed that the Swiss society today, to take it as an example, may properly be said to be in a condition of peace, while the international society is in a condition of war.

If, then, we want to draw a realistic picture of what "a world at peace" would be like, we ought to look at the basic features of the national societies within the boundaries of which "a world at peace" has already been achieved.

The difference between any stable and well-organised national society, on the one hand, and the international society on the other, is that, inside the first, the exercise of power is kept within tolerable limits, while it is not kept within tolerable limits in the second.

The question, then, is how power is kept within limits in such a national society as we would be willing to take as a model for "a world at peace."

To start with an oversimplification, there are two ways in which a society may be organised to keep the exercise of power within acceptable limits. One is that of concentrating overwhelming power in the hands of a single ruler or ruling group. Stalin's Russia will do as an example of such concentration in the hands of a single ruler, today's Russia as an example of such concentration in the hands of a group—in this case the ruling élite of the Communist Party. In any society so organised, the ruling power prevents the unbridled use of any power other than its own in the same way that the administration of a prison limits the exercise of power by the prisoners. Not only did Hobbes regard such a régime as representing the condition of peace, he saw no alternative to such a régime if there were to be any peace. He favoured peace under absolute rule from above because the only alternative, as he saw it, was the war "of every man, against every man," that intolerable condition of anarchy in which "the life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. He was willing to forgo freedom for the sake of peace because he saw no other way in which peace could be secured, and in any case the alternative state of anarchy was hardly conducive to the enjoyment of personal freedom.

Such political experience as we have gained since Hobbes' day has given us reason to know that tyranny is not, in fact, the only alternative to an intolerable anarchy. Sovereign societies of the widest extent have existed, at least since the 18th century, in which power has been limited by another principle than that of its centralisation in a ruler or a ruling group. This brings me to the second way in which a society may organise for its internal peace. This second way, the alternative to the concentration of power at the top, is a balanced distribution of power.

I take the United States as an example, not only because I know it best, but also because it represents the earliest and most notable instance of a self-conscious effort to organise a society so as to prevent the monopolistic concentration of power.

When the American colonists declared their independence of Great Britain they were reacting against the tyrannical impositions of a centralised power, concentrated in the British crown and government. Therefore, when they came to write the Constitution of their own newly established state, their overriding concern was to make provisions that would prevent such a concentration of power in their own government. With this in mind, they wrote what we refer to as a constitution of "checks and balances." For one thing, the power of the Federal government was limited by the powers that the constitutent states of the Union retained. For another, the Federal government was divided into three branches. Legislative powers, assigned to the legislative branch, were withheld from the executive branch; executive powers, assigned to the executive branch, were withheld from the legislative; while the judiciary, a third branch in itself, was made independent of legislative and executive branches alike. The three branches effectively limited one another's exercise of power.

What I have just referred to is simply the formal constitutional arrangements within the American government for such a balanced distribution of power as would reconcile freedom with order by limiting the exercise of all power, the power of government being notably included. But the balance of power within any such society necessarily goes far beyond such formal constitutional arrangements. Such a society must constantly maintain a balance as well among the distinct interest-groups that compose it. There must be a balance, for ex-

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ample, among capital, labour, agriculture, and other economic or professional groupings.

IN THIS DOMAIN the balance tends to be self-adjusting, to work more or less automatically. I shall cite just two examples. At the beginning of the present century big business, symbolised by Wall Street, had grown so powerful that it threatened to upset the balance of power. It threatened to achieve for itself, within the American society, what is the opposite of a balance of power, an hegemony. This threat impelled the other groups in the society to combine together against it and, by means of the so-called "trust-busting" legislation, to reduce and limit its power to a safe level. This was the automatic reaction of the other power-centres to the threatened hegemony of big business.

Again, after World War II, when organised labour appeared to be growing excessively in power, the other groups combined against it to reduce and limit its power by the piece of legislation known as the Taft-Hartley Act.

Freedom and order together can be maintained in whatever kind of society, whether national or international, only where there is such a balance of power as I have described. An hegemony is compatible with the peace of a prison, but it is not compatible with such peace as accommodates the freedom men need to realise their human potential, the freedom that society itself needs to realise the potential of civilisation. Power is kept under control, then, by distributing it among a number of centres, so that the power of each is used to check the power of the others.

I SAID BEFORE that I was oversimplifying when I observed that the two alternative ways of keeping the exercise of power within limits were, first, the establishment of a hegemonial ruling centre that would limit the exercise of power by any other elements in the society over which it ruled; second, the balanced distribution of power to prevent any hegemony. The paradoxical fact is that hegemony itself depends on a balance of power in the society under its rule. Stalin was able to maintain his personal hegemony only by practising balance-of-power politics among the individuals and groups who were his subjects. The only way he was able to maintain his own hegemonial power was by balancing off the Red Army, the Communist Party apparatus, the governmental bureaucracy, and the secret police against one another.

HOW DO WE APPLY this, now, to international society? How do we apply it, specifically, to our objective of "a world at peace"?

We begin by accepting the reality of conflict through the exercise of power. It is at least imaginable that a prison-house peace might some day be achieved on a world-wide scale by a Napoleon, a Hitler, or a Stalin who succeeded in establishing a world-wide hegemony. I dismiss this, however, as being both undesirable and unrealisable in the foreseeable future. This would be "world government" surely, but not of the kind that any morally responsible or realistic advocate of world government has in mind. That leaves the only alternative to hegemony, a balance of power.

It has surely been a prime mistake of statesmen and idealists in our century to regard balance-of-power politics as belonging exclusively to what Hobbes defined as the state of *war*, and as therefore inimical to the state of *peace*. Those who have argued this thesis have simply refused to accept what is needed, in this imperfect world, to prevent the abuse of power that invariably results from the possession of a preponderance. Some of them have refused to accept the continuance of conflict at all, and of the associated exercise of power. Consequently, they have thought in terms of outlawing power politics, of outlawing all uses of power, of ordering power to lie down and be dead. And they have thought of international organisation or world government, not as being based on a balanced distribution of power, but as an alternative that made it unneccessary and, in fact, excluded it. Woodrow Wilson's idea of the League of Nations, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's idea of the United Nations, was that such an organisation would, in each case, make the balance of power unnecessary, that such an organisation was, indeed, quite incompatible with its continuance in any form.

This, to my mind, was a disastrous misconception. For the fact is, as I see it, that no organisation of international society could maintain peace and freedom except on the basis of a balance of power; just as no organisation of a national society can maintain peace and freedom except on a similar basis within the society in which it maintains them. Since we shall always have power with us, it has to be kept in check by the distribution of it among a number of centres that, by maintaining a balance among themselves, prevent the hegemony of any one of them. If we ever have an effective world government, which maintains a condition of world-wide peace, it will

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be able to maintain that condition only on the basis of a balance of power. The first requirement of a world at peace is stability, and stability means a stable balance of power. This has its implications for arms control, which should not aim at a rapid and indiscriminate disarmament, for such a disarmament could be disastrously destabilising and lead to war. Arms control should aim, rather, at the development of an increasingly stable balance of power.

IN ITSELF, HOWEVER, a balance of power is not enough. There must be rules limiting the exercise of power, and such rules must, in turn, represent authority. This is to say that they must have intrinsic authority in men's eyes, and they must also have the backing of some authority that is not intrinsic. The two kinds of authority are both needed, and they tend to reinforce each other.

Let me take a simple example. Most husbands, when they have disputes with their wives, refrain from using their superior physical strength in conducting their side of the conflict. For a husband to use his superior strength in such circumstances would be against the rules that, in any civilised society, apply to the exercise of power. What is it that generally makes husbands respect those rules? One factor may simply be fear of the police. The police represent the authority that is not intrinsic to the rules but that backs them. Even where fear of the police is not a factor, however, a husband in any civilised society will feel a potent psychological inhibition against striking and mauling his wife. What this represents is the intrinsic authority of the rule that makes it a shameful act for a man to strike a woman. In this particular example, the psychological inhibition may even have a genetic basis, as in the case of like inhibitions among other mammalian species—for example, dogs. However that may be, it does have a strong cultural basis, associated with the self-discipline that is the essence of civilisation.

Since a balance of power is not enough, in itself, to bring about "a world at peace," it must be supplemented, at least, by both cultural and institutional inhibitions. And when I refer to "cultural" inhibitions I mean those psychological inhibitions that owe their principal strength to the development of custom in terms of civilisation, in terms of a society's culture.

The whole range of these psychological inhibitions is greater than we sometimes suppose. There is a powerful psychological inhibition, I believe, against any use of nuclear weapons in cold blood, an inhibition that has been growing. In the first half of the 1950s the United States could have used its monopoly of nuclear armament to prevent the Russians from breaking that monopoly, and, in fact, to realise its political will in every dispute in which it was involved. It could have made a desert of any country that was antagonistic to it, and called that desert "peace"—as the Romans did, not so much in Britain as in Carthage, where they did it to their great advantage. If one asks oneself why the United States did not do so, a number of reasons may be adduced. To my mind, however, no reason was greater than the powerful cultural inhibition against destroying, in cold blood, millions of men, woman, and children. We saw the operation here of a psychological deterrent akin to that which deters the husband from using his superior physical strength in the conduct of a conflict with his wife.

There is surely a psychological inhibition against using nuclear weapons that operates, I surmise, among Russians and Chinese as well as among Americans. And it may be that the mere presence of nuclear weapons in the background is accountable for a forced growth, among all the nations today, of a new and intrinsic inhibition against any open and deliberate resort to formal warfare at all.

THE CUSTOMARY INHIBITIONS of civilisation can be greatly promoted, in their development, by institutional inhibitions, such as are represented where the husband is additionally restrained by fear of the police. Therefore, I would expect "a world of peace" to be a world in which international law was respected, not only in itself but also because of institutional provisions that would supplement such authority as was intrinsic to it with authority that was not intrinsic.

The cultural and institutional inhibitions, in their degree, modify the requirements of a balance of power and make it more stable. If balance of power were all that counted, a business-partnership in which one partner owned 49% of the voting stock, the other 51% would be impossible. In practice, however, the majority owner might be expected to refrain from overriding the will of the minority owner, knowing that the result could only be the break-up of a partnership that he cherished.

This essential situation is represented in the Swiss society today. French-speaking Switzerland constitutes roughly one-third of the society, German-speaking Switzerland two-thirds. The German-speaking majority, however, refrains from using its preponderant

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weight to impose its will on the French-speaking minority because the result would be the break-up of the country.

In every liberal democracy, majority rule must be limited by minority rights. Otherwise the result would be either the dissolution of the society or that tyranny of a majority which is no less intolerable than the tyranny of an individual or an oligarchy. If minority rights were not more important than majority rule, the white population of the United States would be free to re-enslave or to exterminate the black population. It is fundamental that majority rule must come second.

Balance of power is necessary. But self-restraint, moderation, and tolerance of diversity are even more important. They constitute the basis of any civilisation at all. (This is not an encouraging thought at a moment when self-restraint, moderation, and tolerance of diversity, within organised societies, is on the wane throughout the civilised world.)

It is clear that the present conflict in the Middle East, which threatens constantly to involve all our nations, can never be resolved by the development of a balance of power alone. The state of war will continue, in spite of a balance, until at last both sides alike learn to recognise the need for applying the civilised virtues to their mutual relations. Catholics and Protestants had to learn this the hard way in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Communist societies and the liberal societies have been in the process of learning it, with respect to their mutual relations, in our own day.

Where conflict is intense, however, it may be that a balance of power, amounting to a stalemate, must acquire an apparently permanent character before the parties to it can bring themselves to accept the self-restraints that make it possible for diverse peoples to live together in the state of peace as Hobbes defined it.

A "world at peace" is a matter of degree, and the process of bringing it into being will have to be by degrees. To institute it overnight. with all the essential components that represent cultural development and custom, would not be within the bounds of the possible. I do not, however, exclude the possibility that this imagined "world at peace" will come in time to save us, that our sky may be cleared of the lowering war-clouds before they break and engulf us.

A Note on Russian Foreign Policy

By George F. Kennan

I HAVE READ Richard Pipes' article with admiration and a very large measure of agreement. For what is said there about the origins, in the Muscovite period, of the Russian view of the outside world and Russia's relationships to it, as well as about the modification of this view during the Petersburg era and its re-assertion by the Bolsheviki after the Revolution, I have only the most hearty concurrence. The essentially religious nature of Russian national feeling; the ideological exclusiveness; the pious abhorrence of foreign values; the narrow xenophobia: all these are not only enduring realities in the pattern of Russian statesmanship but very essential ones, without the recognition of which Russian policies are not to be understood.

I was particularly struck by what Professor Pipes had to say about the predominantly colonial nature of Russian experience and attitudes with respect to border countries. It would be quite justifiable, I think, to distinguish, from the standpoint of Russian policy in any historical epoch, between two wholly different areas of the world beyond Russia's borders. One would be made up of those border regions which a Russian government would like (usually for defensive reasons) to dominate and has some hope of dominating, with a view to excluding the penetration and influence of other powers. The other is made

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up of countries further afield, to which these motives do not extend.

In the first of these areas, foreign-political aims are inextricably intertwined with internal-political ones; for these are areas Moscow would like to subdue, to dominate, and to keep under control. The tendency is to try to bring the political life of these countries in effect into the Russian political system. Policy with relation to them therefore becomes internal Russian policy rather than foreign policy. For this reason there is a tendency to place the conduct of it in other hands, within the Russian government, than those that are normally charged with the conduct of foreign affairs.

Thus, in the final years of the 19th century, policy along the far-flung Asian borders of Russia was largely entrusted to the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Office, which implemented it through a network of "consuls" and political agents stationed across the wide crescent of Asian and Levantine states in question, all the way from Sofia to Harbin. This department, as successive Russian foreign ministers were soon obliged to learn, was very hard to control from within the Foreign Ministry. And its operations were essentially conspiratorial. This was not a branch of policy for which Russia sought the approval of other states or invited their scrutiny; on the contrary, Russian governments would almost rather have desisted entirely from these purposes than reveal them in any way or to have them noted and discussed internationally.

One sees the counterpart of these conditions today in the Middle East; and one is inclined to wonder whether here, once again, it is really the Soviet Foreign Office which is concerned with policy or whether other, darker and less controllable, hands are not more importantly at work.

In the other geographic area, where Russian ambitions of control are not actively involved, the situation is quite different. Here, Russian diplomacy appears to function much like that of any other country, albeit with a very particular stress on secrecy and a particular concern, one feels, for disrupting wherever possible any form of international unity in which Russia cannot play a dominant part.

BUT THERE IS something more, as well. One cannot say that Soviet diplomats, in particular, do not work at the task of trying to learn what goes on in the countries of this area, and to understand it (though one suspects that the KGB works even harder). Yet there is a difference. One also senses something of the boredom and distaste which the life of the Western countries, in particular, seems always to have aroused in Russians travelling and living abroad.

No one who reads the letters and other writings of famous Russian travellers in western Europe in the 19th century can fail to be struck, I think, by the fact that for the most part these visitors were not only unobservant but profoundly uninterested in that which they saw around them. They looked, to be sure, at pictures in galleries; they spent much time at the gaming tables; they took the waters at various spas. They tried, in other words, to imitate what they thought was the life of the European rich. But one looks in vain for any interest in precisely those things that might have been supposed to stand out in greatest contrast to life in Russia: how normal people lived and worked, how their lives were organised, how it happened that cities were impressive, transportation fast and reliable, that streets were clean, that water faucets actually ran, that agriculture was advanced and efficient. All these evidences of a sturdy, successful economic life as well as of high habitual standards of production and upkeep appear to have been taken for granted as something either entirely meaningless or directly wearisome and distasteful—a form of useless good order that induced emptiness of the spirit *(navodil tosku)* and home-sickness.

Something of this distaste for the un-Russian is to be sensed in Russian diplomacy towards those countries that have held no immediate political interest from the standpoint of the possibilities for Russian control. And this being the case, one is tempted to conclude, at the cost of only a slight polemic exaggeration, that Russians have never fully understood, or had much taste for, the concept of international relations among equals, not concerned with each other's domination or destruction. Where the possibility of domination was not present, foreign policy was not really interesting. Where it was interesting, it was not really foreign policy.

Perhaps the concept of mutually profitable and pleasant international relations, as something interesting, hopeful and exciting, is—like others of the attributes of peoples who have had their origins on the shores of the North Sea—a peculiarity of the mercantile, overseas-trading mentality, and not to be understood by those countries whose concepts of international relations arose out of life-and-death encounters with nomadic hordes, or contacts with the universal imperial pretensions of a medieval Byzantium, or both.

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Eduard Fraenkel

IF THERE EVER WAS a *Yeshiva Bocher* among the children of Israel, it was Eduard Fraenkel (1888-1970). He had all the intellectual qualities which characterise the traditional student of the Talmud: exceptional memory, acumen in interpretation, logical rigour, endurance. He was humbly devoted to his masters and proud of what he had learned from them. He referred to them constantly. He never claimed to have gone beyond them and resented any criticism of them. "Bedust thyself with the dust of their feet and drink with thirst their words" was the quotation from the *Pirke Aboth* he liked to repeat. It was perhaps the only Saying of the Fathers he remembered or had ever known. For his education had not included Jewish studies, and his parents had kept him away from pious relatives. His teachers had been professors at German universities: Leo, Wilamowitz, Wackernagel, W. Schulze. Even when he had become an acknowledged master in his own right he never ceased seeking new teachers for himself. As a full professor he sat at the feet of Schiaparelli in Florence, of Lenel in Freiburg, of Beazley at Oxford, of Campana in Pisa. For students of lesser breed he had contempt. Comprehension of divergent points of view was not his way. He dismissed with a characteristic ancestral gesture what was not orthodox.

Of foreign countries he knew and loved Italy. Like all German Jews he felt a complex relationship of superiority, inferiority and affinity with the land where simple people carry about themselves so much of their classical past. During his first visit to Rome he decided to abandon the study of law and to become a classical scholar. His first notable paper was an attempt to establish what Roman *"fides"* was. His first—and perhaps his greatest—masterpiece was his study of Plautus. He did not like to be asked whether the Italians are living characters from Plautus, or whether Plautus' characters were Italian. But without this implicit ambiguity *Plautinisches im Plautus* (1922) would not have been written.

Until the Nazis came to power Fraenkel had been unreservedly committed to German culture and German patriotism, as one would expect from a man of his generation and upbringing. On some occasions he had even been a chauvinist. In June 1915 he published a virulent attack against the Italians in a special number of the *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* (Eduard Meyer was another contributor). In *Gnomon* 1925 he bitterly rebuked the publisher Teubner for having produced an edition of Catullus by an American and then had to apologise for his attack. It was also a common illogicality of his generation and group that he combined strong patriotism with unbounded admiration for Goethe. Yet, unlike many other German Jews, he did not accept the tenet that a formal abjuration of Judaism was a sign of allegiance to Germany. About 1912 Friedrich Leo—himself a baptised Jew—warned him that without baptism he would never get a chair in Germany. Fraenkel used to say that he had replied with a German equivalent of "out of the question." By taking the *Staatsexamen* he prepared himself for the eventuality of having to teach in a secondary school.

The Weimar Republic made the precaution unnecessary. Jews gained access to university chairs without undue difficulties. In the 1920s Fraenkel undoubtedly felt himself rather secure in German society—perhaps a new sensation. His marriage to Ruth von Velsen, a pupil of W. Schulze and a friend of the Wilamowitzes, must have consolidated these feelings. Ulrich Wilamowitz extended to Eduard the fatherly affection he had for Ruth, who had been close to his son Tycho before he was killed in the war—and of course he appreciated in full Fraenkel's scholarly abilities. Fraenkel for his part declared that his mother and Wilamowitz had been the greatest influences in his life.

Fraenkel's books and papers of the '20s display an astonishing mastery of difficult crafts. Problems of style, prosody, juridical and religious language were examined from new angles and in quick succession. At the same time he was open to the new currents of Weimar culture. His attempts to understand Roman classicism (Virgil, Horace) show the influence of Werner Jaeger and even more of Friedrich Gundolf—about whom he always spoke with the utmost respect. Though fundamentally he remained what his pre-1914

*IN this memoir—which he calls a "Kaddish D'Rabbanan"—*ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO, *who is the distinguished professor of ancient history at the University of London, pays tribute to Eduard Fraenkel, who died by his own hand in Oxford recently at the age of 82.*

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teachers had made him, he appeared to be in tune with some of the dominant voices of the Weimar Republic.[1]

With the support of Wilamowitz, Fraenkel's ascent was deservedly quick. He held chairs in Kiel, Göttingen, and Freiburg. His influence was as great in Germany as in Italy (where his friend Giorgio Pasquali, who had been Leo's pupil, worked in close contact with him). What exactly he felt when he was compelled to leave his country in 1934 we can only guess. Fraenkel never spoke about his deeper sorrows. The blow came less unexpectedly to him than to others. He had prepared his inner defences in advance by starting the great commentary on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* which was to keep him busy and alert in England for fifteen years. F. Jacoby turned to Homer and Hesiod to support himself in the last years of the Weimar Republic. Fraenkel chose tragedy, but typically never thought it necessary to explain what he had found for himself in the *Agamemnon.*

In later years he repeatedly said that he had been a lucky man throughout his life—and never more so than when he was elected to the Corpus Christi Chair of Latin one year after his arrival in England. The story of his settlement in Oxford is, however, a complex one. Never an easy and self-assured man, in his first English decade he was prone to fall into a disconcerting alternation of aggressiveness and self-deprecation. Nor was there universal understanding for his situation among his Oxford colleagues.

Recognition and affection grew around him when his seminar became famous and his *Agamemnon* (1950) imposed itself as one of the philological masterpieces of the century. It became consequently easier for him to recognise what he was himself and what he owed to the foreign country in which he was such an honoured guest. A journey to Israel in 1963 moved him profoundly. He read Goethe to the children of his Israeli pupils, but also became more disposed to admit what at the bottom of his heart he had always known—that his own vicissitudes belonged in the context of millenarian Jewish history. It was perhaps natural that in these quieter times he should return to his beloved Horace (and to Aristophanes). There was much wishful thinking in his image of Italy under Augustus. But it supported his subtle and patient interpretation (1957) of the poet whom he saw as the aristocratic and classic counterpart of the archaic plebeian Plautus.

FRAENKEL APPEARED happier in his last years than he had ever been since his arrival in England. Perhaps part of his calmer attitude to life was due to the preparations he had obviously made for a timely departure from it. Readiness for suicide has been a steadying feature of Jewish life at least in recent periods (but the roots go deep into the centuries). It is not a Stoic feature because it is condemned in theory. Three days before his suicide Fraenkel sent a Latin distich to Vincenzo Di Benedetto to congratulate him on his appointment as a professor in Pisa. On the eve of his death he is said to have made arrangements for his next seminar on Sophocles. The death of his wife was the signal for his own death. He did not want to decline sadly in his old age, like the two persons to whom he had dedicated his *Agamemnon.*

Fraenkel cannot be understood merely in terms of scholarly achievement. His basic need was to transmit what he had received. He wanted to be no more than a link in the chain of the transmitters. He was a great master because he had been a devoted pupil. He studied the Classics as his forbears had studied the Torah, not only for knowledge, but for companionship, simple wisdom and uncompromising truth. There is in Jewish liturgy a variant of the Kaddish to be recited, after study, in memory of the dead. Eduard Fraenkel, who would have understood the meaning of it, now joins the Masters for whom this Kaddish is particularly appropriate.

Arnaldo Momigliano

[1] Fraenkel did not reprint any of his humanistic essays in his severely selective *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* (Rome, 1964). The most important are: *Die Stellung des Römertums in der humanistischen Bildung,* (Berlin, 1926) which was discussed by O. Regenbogen, *Gnomon,* vol. 3, 1927, pp. 226-241; *Gedanken zu einer Deutschen Vergilfeier* (Berlin, 1930); "Die klassische Dichtung der Römer", in *Das Problem des Klassischen und die Antike* (Leipzig, 1931), pp. 47-73.

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Mishima's Way

By D. J. Enright

HARAKIRI is a vulgar expression, and thus not properly applicable to what happened. On 25 November Yukio Mishima performed *seppuku* at an Army headquarters in Tokyo. It seems that, together with a group of followers, he intended to raise a coup against the "weak" Japanese government and in favour of rearmament and an enhancement of the spirit of patriotism at present threatened by material prosperity. The Army, officers and men, do not appear to have responded with much enthusiasm. One thing was left to Mishima, not merely a way out but also a way on. He thrust his sword into his left side and dragged it in prescribed manner across his belly. Honour satisfied, one of his companions struck Mishima's head off. The companion in turn commenced the act of self-disembowelment and another member of the group struck his head off. The snag in this process is that finally someone is left without a friend to despatch him. According to reports, the three remaining samurai gave themselves up.

The first reaction to this news of those who knew something about Mishima must have been incredulity. At 45 Mishima was a fantastically successful and prolific author, his reputation as high and as widespread as any in the world. He had written novels, stories, plays, essays; ten of his fictions had been made into films; he had won all the major Japanese awards and would surely have received the Nobel prize within a matter of years. He was an actor (but more of that later) and an athlete; he had married in 1958 and had a son and a daughter. Moreover, he had been a hero of youth, a cult figure at home, and internationally the best-known of Japanese writers because apparently the most "accessible"—though this, I must admit, has always puzzled me. Yet he mounted an attack on the Japanese Army, not for existing, but for not existing with sufficient strength and conviction. And he killed himself in a way which is not only exclusively Japanese but also the end and ultimate of that phenomenon which I can only call Japaneseness.

One's second reaction could well be complete credence. What happened was not all that surprising, for two reasons: Mishima was a Japanese, and Mishima was Mishima. Admittedly, the sexual "frankness" of his writing may have made us think how Western and how modern he was—in the line of Gide, Miller, even Mailer, even (in his occasional mixing of sex and violence) the Soho pornshops—and especially if all we knew of Japanese literature was the *haiku*, that species of verse which is all soul and no body, all refinement and no roughage. His *Five Modern Nō Plays* may have struck us, especially if we were unacquainted with *Nō*, as having something in common with the "Absurd", though they must also have struck us as rather more interesting than most exercises in that modish mode. As for his concern with the Marquis de Sade—what could be more Western and up-to-date than that?

In fact, all the time Mishima was intensely Japanese. The determined perversity of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, the fearful consciousness of it all and (to our eyes at

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least) the final ludicrousness. The young woman squeezing milk out of her breast into an army officer's cup of tea, the hero trampling on the belly of a pregnant prostitute, another character raping a 60-year-old widow as she is engaged in worshipping his club-foot. . . . The exquisitely airless study of homosexuality and alienation in the early *Confessions of a Mask*. . . . The attendant horrors of the recently translated *Forbidden Colours*, such as the ageing author who forces a *Nō* mask representing young womanhood against the face of his drowned unfaithful wife, so that her face "buckled under the mask like so much ripe fruit", or the 43-year-old (and married) Count who "had been intimate with about a thousand boys" (incidentally, the book's American publisher saw it as "an attack on oppressive Japanese marriage customs", among other things). . . . Etsuko, the Cold Comfort Farmer of *Thirst for Love*, who kills her lover, the hired man, with a mattock, while living semi-incestuously with her father-in-law; the book asks significantly, "Is sickness perhaps, after all, only an acceleration of life?" . . . And of course, one must not forget the overtly "traditional" subject matter of the celebrated story, "The Priest of Shiga Temple and His Love", or the strongly regional fishing-village idyll of *The Sound of Waves*. . . .

Much of this could be thought of as "Western" because of the "extreme" nature of the situations and actions, just as the mixture in Mishima's characters of obsessive introspection with gratuitous action could be considered distinctively modern. And yet—as I suggested recently in reviewing an obnoxious novel by a young Japanese whom his American publisher described as "revolutionary" and "the first truly modern Japanese writer"—Japanese writers of fiction have been modern in this sense for a long time, and "extreme situations" are no import from the incontinent West!

I HAVE COME TO SUSPECT that the more the Japanese "ape" the West, the more Japanese they become. Earlier I used to think that the sort of Japanese who always wore *kimono* and never Western garb, who didn't read English and spoke it as little as possible, who lived sequestered in Kyoto or Nara and was the world's leading expert in (say) the 17th-century chronicler Saikaku (lots of indigenous near-porn there!), who had no truck with the P.E.N. or with cultural emissaries from anywhere at all except conceivably China—I used to think that such men, with their cult of nationalism and their distaste if not abhorrence for the West, were dangerous. Latterly, however, I have wondered whether, by comparison, there wasn't almost a racial quiescence about them, and whether those other Japanese who took so keen and protracted an interest in things foreign and modern didn't actually intensify and exacerbate their nationalism, didn't grow even more self-conscious about their Japaneseness. There is nothing like living in a world, whether of reality or fantasy, which is foreign or semi-foreign to make you feel more like what you are. It is a commonplace that Englishmen living in the East and studying things Eastern have sometimes found themselves becoming consciously "British" to such a degree that, once home again, they realise that they have approached very near to the verge of caricature.

JAPAN IS A precarious country—oh, not for the foreigner, who is of a different species and fully recognised as such!—a land of delicate balances and nervous tensions, where one extreme can quickly spill into its opposite extreme with no middle resting-place. To take an instance far removed from melodrama: a gathering of literature professors round a table. In order of seniority, each speaks his piece on the subject "under discussion", and when one finishes all the others nod appreciatively, presumably assentingly. It occurs to the foreign observer that the statements expressed are mutually incompatible, even distinctly contradictory. But everyone has his say, everyone nods, there is no movement to compare opinions, no overt acknowledgement of a disagreement which must be obvious to everybody. The meeting concludes in what appears to be complete amity and mutual satisfaction. I don't mean this is necessarily a bad thing. But the point is that argument would hurl the event from amicability and mutual respect into irrevocable estrangement and disrespect; some of those present would cause face to be lost, others would lose it, and the gentlemen might never be able to look one another in the face again. . . .

Racial generalisations are often odious—but they are difficult to avoid unless you stay put in your native village and refuse to speak to strangers. In simple terms the Japanese find it enormously hard to relax. Or to relax without practically disintegrating. A harmless-seeming form of release like having a few drinks with your pals might end with one jolly companion insulting another past redress: though happily there is a civilised convention whereby the incident is so completely forgotten by all concerned that it really never happened, they never met in that bar. . . .

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ONE COMMON SOLVENT seems to be well-nigh missing from the Japanese scene: the ready humour which eases human contacts. Things cannot be laughed off. This could be a difference between the Japanese and their "elder brothers" the Chinese (though I may be wrong, my observation is of the Overseas Chinese, who have usually had to clip their national wings), for the latter possess a sense of humour—and moreover, I suspect, feel at least as much concern for finance as for face. For all their strong family feeling, the Japanese were traditionally prepared to sacrifice family to Emperor. The Chinese—with a less devout attitude towards supreme authority, hitherto at least—perhaps found nothing indubitably higher than the family: and a good family-man will think twice before committing suicide for abstract reasons. There is little humour in Mishima's work, or else what looks like humour soon reveals an aspect of poignancy or grimness.

In a brash if not impertinent book written some fifteen years ago, I proposed that at the bottom of the Japanese "enigma" (if an enigma is so persistent and consistent and finally, in its manifestations, so predictable, is it still an enigma?) lay this—that the Japanese were not content to be merely human, they aspired (or the opposite as it might turn out) to be gods (or demons). Or else works of art. I wrote then:

> The Japanese may be unique in that their unusually complicated system of behaviour is based not on a recognition of humanity but on a proud and yet pathetic denial of it. . . . The intolerably high standards which they have set for themselves are surely intimately connected with the thread of sudden and desperate violence which runs through their history. Unable to forgive others, they have resorted to assassination; unable to forgive themselves, they have turned to suicide, in its most agonising forms.[1]

"Gods and Works of Art"—my crude aphorism was a convenient summing-up of what must have struck the most casual foreign visitor: that the conventions of social and personal behaviour demand so much from the individual and supply him with comparatively few palliatives, releases, or loopholes. The ice is thin, the water below is deep. All too soon the end of the road is reached, and there is no turning back, no compromise permitted. Then the superior spirit must kill himself. Not suicide by shot-gun or gas-oven or sleeping pills—those are for peasants—but by ritual

[1] *The World of Dew* (1955).

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self-disembowelment. Lovers, it is true, resort to their own sweet way, binding the girl's kimono sash round the two of them and leaping together off a cliff—perhaps, to the dismay of the Bureau of Tourism, a celebrated beauty spot. But love is merely human, ungodlike, even unheroic, and lovers may aptly choose a faintly picturesque but distinctly low-class solution to their problem.

It is characteristic of the Japanese, particularly when they are being consciously Japanese, to make things as difficult as possible for themselves—as gods and works of art should—and to exalt the painful above the painless. Hence the man of honour has no alternative, unless circumstance alone has deprived him of the necessary instruments, but *seppuku,* surely the most difficult method, possibly (and certainly if not managed adroitly) the most painful, undeniably the messiest for those humbler creatures who must clear up afterwards. And possibly, even for us Westerners, the mode richest in diversely symbolic overtones: the dressing up, the farewell message whether written or spoken (according to reports Mishima cried, "Long live the Emperor!"), the ceremonial sword, the baring of the belly, the bowels sliding out (as if to liberate the soul from the taint of human flesh), blood everywhere.

POSSIBLY MISHIMA WAS ONE of those in whom an intimacy with the literature and the life of the West served to sharpen, intensify and exacerbate his awareness of being a Japanese. Left, Right; Pacifist, Militarist; Internationalist, Nationalist—it is a short step psychologically, it seems, from the one to the other, once a constant degree of fanaticism is given. In the early 1950s Americans in Japan were disturbed by the Leftism so prevalent among intellectuals and in the press. In great part, I would say, this was a natural result of the war, or of the defeat, for if the Right and the Militarists have so disastrously compromised your country's honour, how can you be anything but Left and Pacifist—at least for a time? In the longer run, it seems to me, the attitudes of the political Right are so much closer to those of the Japanese psyche that there is less to be feared from the Left. And of course less to be looked for from the Left.[2] A form of Communism may do for the pragmatic and patient Chinese, but any such system of government would soon leave the majority of Japanese feeling like spiritual orphans, disinherited of that within them which can lead equally to great good or to great evil.

Perhaps post-war, post-Hiroshima, the Japanese people were at their best. Unhappiness certainly didn't have to be pursued then. No one could help but admire their stoicism in the face of unrelenting distress, and the rareness of complaint even from those who couldn't be held responsible for what had happened. The question sounds disgusting—but what is prosperity doing to them? It might conceivably turn them into human beings, no better than the rest of us. . . . Mishima was originally considered the spokesman for post-war youth, adrift in the Waste Land, and its spiritual problems. At that time the villain of the piece was Japanese Tradition, for traditions had brought the land to madness and then to waste. But "*après-guerre*" is now long past, and if the spiritual problems still persist despite everything, isn't that because the only solution is Japanese Tradition? The brilliant young Japanese whom foreigners could really talk with, the darling of American publishers who visited the U.S. as guest of the State Department and *Partisan Review,* yet it seems Mishima knew which way his blood called him. At times the most aesthetic, the most "decadent" of writers, yet he went in for weight-lifting and *kendō,* he kept fit. He must have known what a thoroughly Japanese end his thoroughly Japanese patriotism could bring him to.

Mishima himself directed and played the main (and only male) role in a film based on a story of his called "Patriotism".[3] It concerns a young officer whose friends are involved in an attempted coup in 1936. He surmises that they didn't invite him to join them out of consideration for his recent marriage. The follow-

[2] The terms "Left" and "Right" are here even less precise in meaning than usual. "Nowhere do disparate ideologies rest more comfortably side by side than in the head of a Japanese, and the total effect, of course, is of a raging anti-intellectualism," wrote Edward Seidensticker in an article on the Japanese student revolt (ENCOUNTER, June 1970). He added, "The anti-intellectualism is itself very Japanese. When the Japanese seek to establish what it is that makes them themselves . . . they generally come up with some variant upon the concept of 'sincerity', which means a glorification of action after the dictates of one's heart, and a contempt for cogitation. Precisely such an emphasis is basic to the thought of Kobayashi Hideo, the most eminent of modern Japanese critics, and indeed to that of Mishima, best of the younger novelists."

Four days after Mishima's death, *The Observer* quoted "a young woman revolutionary" (*i.e.,* on the Left) as saying, "Mishima used a samurai sword. We carry Molotov cocktails and bamboo spears. Both have the samurai spirit."

[3] Included in the collection, *Death in Midsummer,* published in England in 1967.

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ing day he is to march against these friends. He cannot do this, he cannot be disloyal to the Emperor, he cannot accept a situation in which Imperial troops will be fighting against Imperial troops. He writes a farewell note—"Long live the Imperial Forces"—and places it in the alcove, alongside a scroll inscribed with the characters signifying "Sincerity." He performs the act of *seppuku*, and then his wife, who has sat by throughout, forbidden to assist him, thrusts a dagger into her throat.

I note that in a review in ENCOUNTER I described this story as seemingly "a straight-faced demonstration of the fantastic spiritual ambitiousness, almost arrogance, which has it that nothing in one's life becomes it as much as leaving it, and leaving it as painfully and messily as possible." Attempting to re-read it after the news of Mishima's death, I was physically unable to go on. The act of disembowelment occupies more than four pages of description and, to the horrified reader, seemingly four hours of time:

> . . . the blade was already cutting shallow and had revealed its naked tip, slippery with blood and grease. But, suddenly stricken by a fit of vomiting, the lieutenant cried out hoarsely. The vomiting made the fierce pain fiercer still, and the stomach, which had thus far remained firm and compact, now abruptly heaved, opening wide its wound, and the entrails burst through, as if the wound too were vomiting. Seemingly ignorant of their master's suffering, the entrails gave an impression of robust health and almost disagreeable vitality as they slipped smoothly out and spilled over into the crotch. . . . A raw smell filled the room.

Ghastly as the account is, the words which follow it are almost more shocking:

> It would be difficult to imagine a more heroic sight than that of the lieutenant at this moment, as he mustered his strength and flung back his head.

We may have supposed that this is how the wife sees the husband whom she loved so much. But possibly this was how Mishima himself saw the act itself.

The officer in the story had to do the whole job himself. In our perhaps irrelevant Western way we can hope that Mishima, who in accordance with tradition was able to call on the services of a comrade, suffered much less hideously and long.

IN A SOLEMN EDITORIAL two days later, *The Times* described Mishima's action as "a shocking intrusion" of the old Japan. "Who is to say," it asked quite sensibly, "what may be its ramifications, touching deeply-buried nerves in all parts of Japanese society?" Yet, it added judiciously, however twisted the gesture seems to our way of thinking, "Mr Mishima was promoting a conception of honour and an affirmation of values." Some contemplation of this honour and its requirements has driven me into the arms of Falstaff. "God keep lead out of me! I need no more weight than mine own bowels." Finally *The Times* assured the foreign observer that for him "there is neither cause for alarm nor for sneering." Who on earth is going to *sneer*? As for alarm—speaking for myself, I am merely appalled and terrified.

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Lord of the Ring

Hemingway's "Last Novel" — By PAUL THEROUX

ERNEST HEMINGWAY imagined himself, as all his admirers now do, a heavyweight, a literary hard puncher and even physically a formidable opponent. He valued the attributes that the American male (and the Karamojong warrior) value. His biographer shares the attitude and the metaphor: "He . . . dealt, almost singlehanded, a permanent blow against the affected, the namby-pamby. . . ." He took enormous pleasure in flooring a muscular Negro with his bare fists, and delivering a manuscript he could say, "I'll defend the title again against all the good young new ones." He spoke of the discipline needed for writing as similar to that for successful boxing; he was proud of his good health, doing exercises, running, swimming and rising early while he was engaged on a book; and he saw his writing career in terms of the ring: "I started out very quiet and I beat Mr Turgenev. Then I trained hard and I beat Mr de Maupassant. I've fought two draws with Mr Stendhal." He had the humility to add, "But nobody's going to get me in the ring with Mr Tolstoy. . . ." His line was that he could lick practically any man in the house.

He was a destroyer and so are many of his characters: even the gentle Santiago recalls a triumphant arm-wrestling match (with a muscular Negro); others of his characters are fighters, inclined towards pugilism. One sees the glamour: his destroyers come in pairs and all eyes are on them; it is one big man against another, and implies competition, ultimately a winner and a loser. We are to admire the winner (Hemingway, not Turgenev; Santiago, not the Negro). But the very reverent biographer concedes bullying: "Throughout the month of May, Ernest's behaviour was often that of a bully." Professor Carlos Baker is referring to Hemingway ruining his friend's catch of a large marlin by firing a tommy-gun at some circling sharks which, maddened by the taste of their own spilt blood, devour most of the marlin. Later in that same month Hemingway beats up Joseph Knapp, a New York publisher. Both of these incidents, tidied up to make the gunner heroic and the fight with the rich intruder a justly-deserved victory, are retold in *Islands in the Stream*, with the *envoi*, black calypso singers immortalising the fist-fight with a song as, in 1935, they "celebrated Ernest's victory with an extemporaneous song about the 'big slob' from Key West."

The boxer recalls his famous matches, the novelist his novels; a boxer is bigger than any of his fights and though writing is hardly a competitive art, much less a sport, the novelist postured deliberately to be bigger than any of his novels. The question of "style", a favourite boxing word, is fundamental to a discussion of Hemingway's work; not style as a literary value but style as a posture, emphasising the face, the voice, the stance. Hemingway blamed the bad reviews of *Across the River and into the Trees* on his photograph that appeared on the dust jacket ("Makes me look like a cat-eating Zombie"); the voice is familiar ("You got very hungry when you did not eat enough in Paris . . ."); and the stance? Always the boxer's: "Am trying to knock Mr Shakespeare on his ass."

The reputation is all, and counts for more than the writing. Asked who is the most popular American writer in the Soviet Union, the Russian journalist says, "Papa." The note of friendly intimacy is common: it is the man that matters. The American writer produces a good book and acquires a reputation. The reputation displaces the idea of literary quality: the idea of the author is much more important than the ideas in the work. Interesting, the number of academics who care so deeply about the man's adventures and leave the work unread, or see blasphemy in a low evaluation of it. Hemingway claimed to dislike academics, but those that flattered him were welcomed at his haunts and in his house; he yarned them, feeding them lines, took them on his boat, and wrote them candid letters. In the letter refusing Carlos Baker permission to write a biography, Hemingway mentions ("with almost bewildering frankness") how he practised *coitus interruptus* with his second wife. (The fact appears in Professor Baker's recent biography, *Ernest Hemingway—A Life Story*.)

Since the aggressive narcissism of commerce and the vanity of money are the driving forces of reputation-making, the progress of the reputation is best described in the language of the stock-exchange. A writer appears on the market; he has considerable long-term upside

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potential; he gets a divorce and hits a slump, his plane crashes in jungle and this is a technical rally; he tumbles and bottoms out, he meets resistance at the buyer level, then rallies again and inflates and firms up and meets a negative critical flow, and so forth. This does not have much to do with writing, but Hemingway's reputation grew without much reference to his work, and in the years since his death, aided by the urgent whisperings of fact-finders and anecdotalists, it has rallied and consolidated sideways. Now a "new" novel has been found[1]; it was written twenty years ago and apparently abandoned by the author. It is technically his last novel and its publication is a triumph for those obsessed with the man.

THE NOVEL HAS NO literary importance, but its personal candour is essential. This is of course the basest motive for reading; contemptuous of the art of fiction, the reader is interested in the book only in so far as it gives access to the author: "This is just a story but Ernest Hemingway is writing it. . . ." The satisfactions are finding out how Hemingway drank and handled a boat, and spoke, and made love, and treated his friends. These revelations are considered important, for once the reputation is made and the novel is a study rather than a pleasure (or a bore), the hero of the novel is its author. Fortunately for Hemingway his life began to be studied before he failed as a novelist, so it was never acceptable to say, "This novel is bad." The novels were aspects of the man, and the man's heroism was never questioned.

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM is divided into three parts. In 1951 Hemingway said that parts 2 and 3 were "in shape to publish", but he did not publish them. The novel (to use the publisher's term; it is really nothing of the kind) is set in the Caribbean and seems originally to have been intended as a study of the sea. Previous titles of the sections were *The Sea when Young, The Sea when Absent,* and *The Sea in Being,* retitled in the present edition as "Bimini", "Cuba" and "At Sea." The sections are loosely linked by the common subject of the sea and by the main character, Thomas Hudson, who is "in appearance, manner, and personal history . . . clearly based on Ernest himself" (according to Professor Baker). There was a fourth

[1] *Islands in the Stream.* By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. Collins, £2.

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section, and Thomas Hudson was not the hero of it. This was the story of an old man, Santiago, who caught a marlin and battled to save it; it was published (Hemingway had some reservations about its length) as *The Old Man and the Sea.* Professor Baker reports that Hemingway was very enthusiastic about the unpublished parts of the book he was calling *The Island and the Stream,* but rather than publish it he turned from it and wrote *A Moveable Feast,* his last book, parts of which are prefigured in the reminiscences of Thomas Hudson. Hudson, in his youth, also lived with his wife and small child over a sawmill in Paris in the 1920s, and had a cat named F. Puss and liked the bicycle races and drank in cafés with James Joyce and Ezra Pound.

Here, perhaps, is the reason Hemingway never published *Islands in the Stream.* It was autobiography—this is clear from the duplicated recollections in *A Moveable Feast*—but he wanted it to read as fiction. He wrote it at an age when most novelists turn to autobiography, but rather than reveal the novel as that, he published the story of Santiago and spent the last three years of his life writing a straightforward reminiscence, to which he added ambiguously in the Preface, "If the reader prefers, this book may be regarded as fiction. . . ." It is hard to say whether he would have published the present novel, had he allowed himself to live a few years longer. This is crucial because a writer can only be held responsible for what he publishes himself and stands by; he can't be blamed for writing a bad book that he chose to leave in a bottom drawer.

THOMAS HUDSON is a painter. He has been divorced and he lives in different places in the Caribbean. He seems to have a separate personality for each place. In the first section of the book, on the island of Bimini, he is a reticent friend, a quiet drunk and a devoted father; he fishes with his three boys and does a little painting of the Winslow Homer variety. The second section is set largely in a bar in Havana; here Hudson is a bar-fly, drinking and betting, and talking at some length to an elderly prostitute; he does no painting. A sea chase occupies the whole of the third section; Hudson is a bullying, Bogartesque ship's captain pursuing Germans along the coast of Cuba. Three episodes, hardly stories, and except for Hudson, who alters but does not grow, the episodes bear no relation to one another. The three boys, Hudson's children, are all dead by the time the second section opens, possibly to give Hudson nothing to live for, though more likely because Hemingway couldn't think of any way of working them into the conversation with the elderly prostitute or the pursuit of the Germans. The artless novelist has his reasons for disposing of characters, usually no more complicated than the eldest boy's in *Jude the Obscure,* when he hanged himself and his siblings: "Done because we are too menny."

Hudson gets little satisfaction (but evidently lots of cash) from his painting. He is, for most of the book, an aggressive self-absorbed man for whom killing a big fish and disembowelling a German are ways of proving one's manhood. It is the philosophy of combat—perversely based on killing one's friend, for the noblest combat is destroying something beautiful, something one values. "In the worst parts, when I was tiredest, I couldn't tell which was him and which was me," says Dave, one of the sons, after the fish has been caught and killed. Incapable of creation, these characters see beauty in destruction; considering themselves men, in the proverbial sense of the word, their ambition must be to win: to kill the lion, to floor the Negro, to catch the fish, to have always the winning hand. Achievement is irrelevant here (Hudson's painting is all but dismissed as daubing) because achievement implies solitary creation. Winning is another matter: one wins by beating one's opponent. Thus, most strangely: "Am trying to knock Mr Shakespeare on his ass."

> "All fights are bad."
> "I know it. But what are you going to do about them?"
> "You have to win them when they start."

Failure is losing, because losing is humiliation, unbecoming to a man: "Get it straight. Your boy you lose. Love you lose. Honour has been gone for a long time. Duty you do." That is Hudson at his lowest point, a loser. He recovers, but others are not so lucky, for the last loser deserves it, as the winner deserves his success. The loser's mortality proves more than the winner's physical superiority—it implies the winner's immortality. So much for the fist-fight between Roger and the wealthy yachtsman, which Roger wins, saying, "That guy was no good, Tom." And Thomas Hudson agrees: "You taught him something." The implication is that the yachtsman has been taught that he will never win a fist-fight with a man Hemingway conceives to be morally superior. In this case the man should know better: Roger is a writer and the snivelling yachtsman he defeats is a publisher.

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Hemingway insists on the rightness of the philosophy. Consequently there is an interminable repetition of the words fine and good and true and wonderful and brave and necessary, all applied to bullying and mean-spirited and unworthy acts, "a wonderful chase," "a fine shot," "a beautiful kill." A sententious utterance, implying if not employing one of these words, closes each incident. After Dave hooks the swordfish and yanks on him for six hours (and twenty-five pages of the book), the motto is, "But there is a time boys have to do things if they are ever going to be men." An odd thing for a painter to say; but Thomas Hudson is no creator.

There is a great deal of killing in the book, practically all of it gratuitous, as when the swordfish is killed or Thomas Hudson shoots a land crab that appears on his path (". . . the crab disintegrated . . . Poor old crab, he thought. . . .") or the Germans are shelled. Murder is necessary and it is a shame it makes one feel bad:

> Then why don't you care about anything? he asked himself. Why don't you think of them as murderers and have the righteous feelings that you should have. . . . Because we are all murderers, he told himself. We all are on both sides, if we are any good, and no good will come of any of it.
>
> But you have to do it. Sure, he said.

We all are on both sides: "I couldn't tell which was him and which was me," says Dave when the fish is dead; and "He was a pretty good guy," Willie says of the German he's blown to bits. The philosophy demands the sentimentality of pity. And grief is self-pity. Here is Hudson revealing the death of his son to the mother of the boy, his ex-wife:

> "That isn't it," she said. "Tell me, is he dead?"
>
> "Sure."
>
> "Please hold me tight. I am ill now." He felt her shaking and he knelt by the chair and held her and felt her tremble. Then she said: "And poor you. Poor, poor you."
>
> After a time she said: "I'm sorry for everything I ever did or said."
>
> "Me, too."
>
> "Poor you and poor me."
>
> "Poor everybody," he said, and he did not add, "Poor Tom."

A very large number of suicides, by various means, are mentioned in the novel as well, remarked upon with a kind of queer joy. Obeying the perverse logic of destruction, the destroyer as hero, it is consistent that after subduing or killing every powerful thing on earth, the man, to maintain the image of his invincibility, kills himself. The warrior runs

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upon his own sword. Self-slaughter is the only acceptable end for the destroying hero; any other death is humiliating defeat. Hudson does not commit suicide. At the end of the book, wounded by Germans for whom he has developed an eager affection, he is full of self-love and self-loathing which, combined, turn to pride and a satisfied self-pity. Motto: "You never understand anybody that loves you."

THE HEMINGWAY STAMP, that cauliflower ear-mark that characterises his worst fiction, is everywhere apparent. Hudson reflects on catnip: "There still should be some catnip in the shelf of drawers of the cat room if it hasn't gotten too dry and lost its force. It lost its force very quickly in the tropics and the catnip that you raised in the garden had no force at all." Hudson has a drink: ". . . strong with the real Gordon's gin that made it alive to his tongue and rewarding to swallow. . . . It tastes as good as a drawing sail feels, he thought. It is a hell of a good drink." The descriptions of food and wine are given lovingly, while love-making is reduced to utter vagueness: "He did something. . . . She did something else. . . ."

The novel is offered as something of a departure for Hemingway, with "a rich and relaxed sense of humour." But nearly all the humour depends on seeing bullying or ridicule as comic: attempting to set a dock on fire, humiliating the yachtsman or taking the mickey out of a tourist or "a fine old whore," or teasing a sleepy-headed servant. In each case there is a victim who is weak or passive; he is made a figure of fun and one is meant to find him contemptible and so laughable. The humour has Thomas Hudson and his friends in stitches, and in many places Hudson says how much he is enjoying himself, but he is a embittered, heartless, unquestioning and deluded man. Physical superiority is what Hudson cares about, but he is old and life is unbearable for him.

The disappointment and the sour regret give the novel the tone of a suicide note. It is sad to think that Hemingway wrote it, and understandable that he left it in a bottom drawer.

On the Philosophy of Witchcraft

New Light on Dark Doctrines — By I. M. LEWIS

WITH REPORTS OF witchcraft at Eton College and rampant Scientologists ranting against evil psychiatry, all the signs indicate that we live in an era of marginal mystical revival. In the same spirit the Sunday colour supplements invite us to contemplate the alleged therapeutic potentialities of healing magic and of "white" witchcraft, and some psychiatrists even echo the cry (regularly reproduced in the *New Statesman*) that "Spiritualism proves survival." In less exalted circles, the revealing popularity of Dennis Wheatley's novels on the subject, of such magazines as *Man, Myth and Magic* (as well as its less pretentious rivals), and the increasing public appetite for satanic films of the Dracula type all point to the same conclusion. Traditional religion may be dead or dying—but popular superstition was never more alive or near the surface of public consciousness. These indications and the success of his own book,[1] make nonsense of Mr Pennethorne Hughes's comforting, but unconvincing assertion that "in Europe the Church, and the Rationalist, have won." What is more appropriate, then, than to turn from these makeshift mysticisms to the solid stuff of witchcraft as it exists in communities where it is unashamedly taken for granted as a basic fact of life and as an intrinsic part of everyday experience?

Drawing heavily upon anthropological reports from Africa (where after all the phenomenon has been most fully studied), Dr Lucy Mair surveys the field comprehensively in her expert little book.[2] Her guiding assumption is that "in a world where there are few assured techniques for dealing with everyday crises . . . a belief in witches . . . is not only not foolish, it is indispensable." For whatever else they do, and however at variance with true causality, witchcraft beliefs furnish a theory of ultimate causation. For those who believe in them, they afford a means of understanding and of coming to terms with the vicissitudes and inequalities of life, however trivial or serious, in terms of the malignant power to harm ascribed to other

[1] *Witchcraft.* By PENNETHORNE HUGHES. Penguin Books (5th reprinting) 5s.
[2] *Witchcraft.* By LUCY MAIR. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, World University Library, 16s.

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members of society. They are thus rooted in two fundamental facts: that life is uncertain and full of difficulty, and that living together inevitably generates tensions and animosities which are incompatible with the ideal of brotherly fellowship.

From this anthropological point of view, it is not necessary to invoke, as Sir Walter Scott does in his eminently readable *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (now re-printed),[3] that blanket non-explanation "superstition" as the basis for credence in the power of witchcraft. Nor is it essential to assume, as he appears to, that morbid fantasies of mentally ill people provide the basic material on which such beliefs are primarily nourished. All that is required is the presence in human groups of the very human emotions of fear, envy, and malice, and the existence of the equally natural aspiration to seek to control and understand the cruel tricks which fortune plays to an extent which exceeds what is actually possible in pragmatic terms.

Such a system of beliefs ponders and ultimately answers that most refractory of all questions: why affliction and calamities occur, and why they strike particular individuals or segments of society at particular times and places while others remain unaffected. To hold such beliefs is not, as so many historians suppose, to dispense with rational causation. On the contrary, rational and witchcraft explanations apply at different levels of understanding. If the "why" of adverse fortune is elucidated in terms of malignant witchcraft, "how" it actually takes place and affects people is understood perfectly rationally. Hence there is nothing strange or incomprehensible in the behaviour of the African patient who seeks treatment for the same illness from both traditional and modern sources. The traditional "witch-doctor" or "medicine-man" on the one hand, and the modern Western physician on the other, treat the patient's complaint at different levels of causality. Modern "rational" interpretations of events do not thus necessarily contradict and hence, as Mr Hughes tends naïvely to suppose, automatically replace those involving witchcraft or other mystical causes.

Above all, as Professor Mair emphasises, witchcraft beliefs explain why *undeserved* misfortunes occur and so contend with the perennial problem of the reluctantly acknowledged existence of evil. Witchcraft thus offers a much needed Escape Clause to those closed cosmological and religious systems which affirm that prosperity and success are the lot of the just, while misfortune dogs the sinner. For it is precisely in terms of the malevolent evil power of others that those ill-fortunes which are judged to be unmerited can be accounted for in a manner which both exonerates the victim from any taint of guilt and confirms that the gods are just and good. Hence, witchcraft saves from the danger of self-contradiction those non-eschatological faiths which assume that men reap their rewards for good or ill in this life and not in the hereafter.

BUT WITCHCRAFT BELIEFS do far more than merely underwrite celestial justice. Through their articulation and expression in specific accusations, men are enabled to relate their experience of suffering and misfortune to the quality of their social relationships. This equally significant aspect concerning the connection between witchcraft and the social order, Professor Mair explores with a wealth of well-chosen examples.[4] She sets the scene for this sociological approach to witchcraft by quoting to good effect that homely but widely valid vignette of the witchcraft nexus offered by the Elizabethan clergyman, George Gifford:

> Some woman doth fall out bitterly with a neighbour; there followeth some great hurt. . . . There is a suspicion conceived. Within few years after she is in jar with another. He is also plagued. This is noted of all. Great fame is spread of the matter. Mother W is a witch. . . . Well, Mother W doth begin to be very odious and terrible unto many, her neighbours dare say nothing but yet in their hearts they wish she were hanged. Shortly after another falleth sick and doth pine. . . . The neighbours come to visit him. Well neighbour, saith one, do ye not suspect some naughty dealing; did ye never anger Mother W?

Here in a nutshell is the whole aetiology of the situation in which witchcraft accusations are made. When disaster strikes, the victim reviews in his mind his past dealings with his fellows, and in the light of his recollection of past and present jealousies and animosities seeks his witch. In this process of brooding on possible sources for his present troubles he is aided by a range of divinatory and oracular witch-identifying techniques which Professor Mair describes fully. But whatever diagnostic procedure is followed, the result is always the same. Responsibility for present adversities is pinned on present and past foes.

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[3] *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.* By SIR WALTER SCOTT. With a new introduction by R. L. Brown. S.R. Publishers, Ltd., 42s.

[4] This is also the main theme of Professor Max Marwick's admirable collection of excerpts from articles and books on witchcraft by anthropologists and historians, published in the Penguin Sociology Readings series *Witchcraft and Sorcery.* Ed. by Max Marwick. Penguin Books, 10s.

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IN MARKED CONTRAST to our popular stereotype of the witch as a relatively harmless, eccentric old lady with cat and crystal ball, here the witch emerges in his true colours as the quintessence of evil, the supreme enemy of the community. In this guise he, or she, (for witchcraft has no sexual bias) is seen as the subverter of public morality and decency, the perpetrator of every conceivable obscenity, the sinister antithesis of the good neighbour. It is in terms of this grotesque image, attributed to an enemy or rival, that the victim of distress and sickness seeks some relief for his plight. As those will recall who have read accounts of the "witch bitches" of Salem (so effectively dramatised in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible),* the real victim where witchcraft holds sway is not the bewitched subject but the *accused witch.* For as we now readily appreciate when we consider the effects of the "smelling out" of communists in America or of Jews in the Communist states, or indeed of similar attempts in other embattled communities to extirpate "treachery" and "betrayal," the aim is to identify a convenient scapegoat in terms of the assumed malevolence of one's enemies. And none do we fear more than those we hate. It is thus the accused "witch" who is in reality attacked and assailed. The "bewitched" victim in effect makes a virtue of adversity, adopting a strategy of aggressive attack which is designed to discredit, deny, and ultimately to sever all links of common obligation and faith with the accused "witch."

Those who attribute their ills to the malevolent malice of witches thus protest their own innocence. In the most profoundly satisfying manner, they give vent to that popular emotion —moral indignation. And the targets they select generally reflect, either directly or indirectly, recurrent strains and stresses in social relations. Hence, as Max Marwick puts it in one of his own contributions to *Witchcraft and Sorcery,* the incidence of witchcraft accusations often serves as a "social strain gauge."

NOWHERE, of course, are these themes better exemplified than in our own Christian history. As Sir Walter Scott reminds us in his *Letters on Demonology* and as readers of Trevor-Roper's articles[5] on the subject will recall, it was the challenge directed at the supremacy of the Church of Rome by the rise of new sects before and during the Reformation which encouraged the Catholic authorities to equate witchcraft with heresy. As Sir Walter says, it is easy to appreciate "the point aimed at by the Catholics in thus confusing and blending the doctrines of heresy and the practice of witchcraft, and how a meeting of inoffensive Protestants could be cunningly identified with a Sabbath of hags and fiends." And the zeal of the Inquisitors was only surpassed by the puritanical fanaticism with which the Calvinists hunted down their adversaries under the banner of the same righteous slogan. For historians, indeed, it is strangely ironical that the more extreme Protestants should have so readily assumed the mantle of their enemies precisely when some of the latter (at least in England) had ceased to believe in the reality of witchcraft. Trevor Davies,[6] for instance, has argued that to a significant extent the Great Rebellion was a struggle between the destroyers and the defenders of witchcraft, so that the Rebellion itself assumed something of the character of those utopian anti-witchcraft movements which Professor Mair and a number of contributors to Professor Marwick's volume describe in tribal circumstances. Today, unhappily, these old themes in Christian history are again in play in the tragic events in contemporary Ulster where, apparently, the more extreme elements on both sides regard their opponents as little less than satanic heretics.

In this spirit, then, witchcraft accusations represent a distancing manoeuvre which says, in effect, "Keep your distance, we don't want you here." Implicit in Professor Mair's conclusions, although she does not spell them out, are the obvious analogies with our present situation of racial tension. For those who today seek an explanation of all society's ills, and particularly of our economic shortcomings, in terms of an imputed malignance which transcends the bounds of rational reasoning on the part of the sexually obscene, grasping, and fundamentally ill-disposed alien bogyman are following the familiar path of the witch accuser. And in this context there are many who emerge as contemporary analogues of that equally sincere but just as odious 17th-century witch-finder, Mathew Hopkins.

IN EXAMINING THE NEXUS of social conflict in which in tribal societies witchcraft accusations flourish, Lucy Mair asserts that people of different social rank are not expected to be friends and cannot quarrel. Therefore witchcraft accusations are not made be-

[5] H. R. Trevor-Roper, "The Witch Craze," ENCOUNTER (May and June 1967).
[6] R. Trevor Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs* (1947).

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tween them. Although she notes that this conclusion does not fit the case of A. D. Macfarlane's important study of accusations in 17th-century Essex,[7] where the rich accused the poor, she leaves the matter there. I would go farther to argue that in Africa—as well as in Essex (and in India to which neither Dr Mair nor Dr Marwick's contributors make reference)—there is abundant evidence to show that witchcraft accusations are, in fact, often levelled by superior against inferior. Indeed a more comprehensive budget of the scope of witchcraft accusations would show that typically they are made either between equals, or by superior against subordinate. The rare cases where those under authority make such charges against their elders and betters serve to prove the rule. For they are usually examples where the intention of the accusation is to discredit the superior, to pull him down from his lofty pinnacle in order to assert equality of status, or to terminate the relationship of dependence. This pattern of the incidence of witchcraft accusations accords well with the widespread ascription of a special endowment of mystical power to the lowly and oppressed. It is clearly reflected in the Indian caste system, and elements of it can also be seen in that almost equally rigid and supposedly divinely ordained system of entrenched inequality which is represented by South African apartheid.[8] Hence, as with so many other institutions, witchcraft can exert completely contradictory effects in different social conditions. In some settings it sustains the existing order, whereas in others it challenges it, expressing change and innovation.

It will be evident that the witchcraft philosophy, for that is what it is, constitutes a supremely ethnocentric view of the world in which it is assumed that every unkind stroke of fortune may reflect the animosity of other human beings. This clearly amounts to an overdetermined psychiatry. For it affirms that not merely genuine psychosomatic and other psychiatric illnesses are the product of social tensions (as much of functional psychiatry today holds), but that organic disorders and calamities in general can also be accounted for in the same way. This limited equivalence should make us wary of trying to equate witchcraft beliefs with acute paranoia. In dealing with witchcraft in earlier centuries in Europe, this, however, is roughly what historians have often done. As Professor Mair justly observes, historians tend to interpret such beliefs in our ancestors as the product of some curious abnormality of thought. In so far as explanations for this are sought in terms other than the psychological, what is perhaps most frequently invoked is the machinations of the established church in its efforts to stamp out heretical sects.

For the sociologist and social anthropologist, however, this is a non-problem. The real issue, from their point of view, is not the existence of these beliefs, but their eclipse in the 18th century. Here, as Lucy Mair notes, a valuable clue seems to lie in Macfarlane's findings with reference to 17th-century Essex. For he concludes that the decline in witchcraft prosecutions in England is correlated with the change from the conception of charity as a general Christian duty to the view that it should not be given indiscriminately. He couples this with the development of formal institutions providing for the relief of the poor. Thus, once the needs of indigent neighbours could be met by the state, the more successful were no longer obliged to feel guilt when they refused charity to the former. And having a clear conscience, the rich would not require to see in the insistent demands of the poor the sinister image of the witch who protests too much and has to be kept in check by witchcraft denunciation.

BUT CAN THIS REALLY BE all that is necessary for witchcraft beliefs to fall into disarray and decay? We have also to consider their theological function. If witchcraft beliefs attach particularly to non-eschatological religions which enshrine the comforting doctrine that the just prosper, one would expect their decline to be a product not merely of increasing scientific knowledge, but also of a shift away from this sort of community-centred creed to that in which heaven and hell assume crucial importance as the ultimate reference points of man's conduct on earth. The disappearance of the witchcraft escape-clause would thus suggest an *enhanced* emphasis on eschatology. Is it altogether too fanciful to surmise that there may also be some connection in our present climate of opinion between the modern stress on the here-and-now elements of the Christian faith and the rising tide of interest in fringe mysticism? For those who wish to pursue these and other less wildly speculative interests, the books of Macfarlane, Mair, and Marwick all provide excellent points of departure. They should stimulate new developments in this increasingly topical field.

[7] *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England.* By A. D. MACFARLANE. Routledge, 90s.

[8] This argument is developed more fully in chapter IV of my *Ecstatic Religion,* (London, 1971) Penguin Books.

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Hear the Word of the Critic

By William Walsh

THERE IS IN A LARGE northern university a unit called *The Institute of Tribology*, the purpose of which is to investigate the nature and degree of the slipperiness of oils and similar substances. The sliding, glycerine quality of words—their slyness and two-facedness—suggests them as very likely candidates to join a squad of examinable lubricants. Perhaps a representative sample—these very books—might be sent north for investigation. All of them at least have to do with the relations among the members of I. A. Richards's geometrically abstract triad: word, thing, idea. Not that these exist with anything like the clear-cut identity Richards attributes to them. In both themselves and their relationship they are cloudier and more perverse than the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* or *Practical Criticism* allows, altogether less eloquent and more bloody-mindedly thick and family-like. One can see them in these books passing one another, jostling one another, making cloudy signals to one another, contradicting, qualifying and tripping one another up.

But as soon as I pick up Storm Jameson's critical reflections *Parthian Words*[1] I am reminded that words don't have to be slippery. Hers are gravelly and abrasive, peppered with flint, and stonily Yorkshire. She writes about the novel and its development, its language and themes and significance. Her book is strenuous and wholesome. The tang of the best kind of simplicity and a bracing sort of good sense run right through it. She will have nothing to do with those who romanticise the wolf in man, with the pornography of cruelty, with Mr Maurice Girodias' "great revolution", with the appalling monotony of *The Naked Lunch* or *An American Dream*—exercises in the progressive dehumanisation of human sensibility. She can't bear the acrid smell of self-dislike and guilt they give out. And she exposes the mocking paradox by which pornographic fiction which is meant to be a revolt against the world of abstraction and mechanical living becomes itself the purest example of what it rejects.

> The roots joining a literature of self-hatred and self-determination to the concentration camp world run underground. But they run.

In her grittily sensible way, Storm Jameson puts to us unanswerable propositions: that man loose in a meaningless world is apt to be dull, mischievous and even murderous; that no novel can escape from the burden of substance—its relation to a real world; that the great novelists were not primarily interested in expressing themselves. "They did that, but they did that with their attention elsewhere, on their life of confrontation—you may prefer contention or *contestation*—with reality"; and that, since the mystery of substance cannot be separated from that of language, when language is impoverished all is impoverished.

> At best, words distort and partly betray the truths they make visible. At worst, when they are used sluttishly, with no care to fit them to a reality penetrated as deeply as the writer's intellect, good faith, and above all energy, will take him, they weaken still further the most critical of all links with the past and future of our common culture, and add to the chaos and unhappiness of our time.

ONE OF STORM JAMESON'S youthful ambitions, after her First in English and the publication of her Master's thesis, was to become a university teacher. Had she done so she might well have had some or all of the writers I shall be considering in her classes. Intelligence and age would certainly have allowed it, and good might have come of it for both teacher and students. Storm Jameson might have been better tested by them than by some of her own teachers, and her tonic human quality might have had an astringent influence on the facile and an unstiffening one on the sullen—although sullen is too ugly a word for the tone of Terry Eagleton's *Exiles and Emigrés*.[2] Severe would be better. His book shows that kind of activity of intelligence which occasionally knots itself in its own perplexities. He certainly shows himself to

[1] *Parthian Words*. By STORM JAMESON. Collins & Harvill, 32s.

[2] *Exiles and Emigrés: Studies in Modern Literature*. By TERRY EAGLETON. Chatto & Windus, 36s.

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possess Storm Jameson's "intellect, good faith and energy", although whether these always penetrate his words, and particularly his more sociological idiom, is a different question.

> The argument of this book is that this general paradox has particular relevance in a society where, for reasons which I believe to be structural rather than incidental, the externality of the literal or metaphorical exile on the one hand, and a narrowly based empiricist naturalism on the other, have been common enough substitutes for genuine "objectivity" and imaginative penetration.

Mr Eagleton not only has good faith but that more difficult possession, faith. His "beliefs and foregone conclusions" (Lawrence's phrase) are leftist, democratic, polite, preoccupied with the injustice of class. He is explicit about his debt to the New Left—to the gently English version, that is, now so conclusively overtaken by more novel and sinister *gaucheries*. Within this somewhat oppressive context his studies of individual writers, especially Waugh, Graham Greene, Eliot, Auden, are deft and sharp, and, where his beliefs are not too intrusive, just and sensitive. He is apt to take some of them, particularly Waugh, too seriously, sliding in an abstract indignation from Margot to her class as though she were a genuinely representative figure, and talking quite seriously of Paul's being drawn into upper-class life, as though what he got into was the commonly led life of the then upper class. There is something rather pinched in his discussion of class when one compares it, for example, with the way F. R. Leavis treats it in his book on Lawrence, whose achievement it was (according to Mr Eagleton) to bring to bear on the disintegrating order of his time the rich values of a working-class experience. (And what a curiously reductive way that is to describe the work of so individual a genius!)

But he does define exactly the sensibility of such writers as Waugh, the early Huxley and Virginia Woolf, when he says that they operate a mode of perception which is in fact not critically detached but only part of the world it observes, and he notes how frequently a neutrality of registration suggests a control by the artist which is not really there at all. The emptiness glimpsed by these writers at the core of a declining English culture is structural, he insists, a function of class; to suggest that it is in any way human and universal and therefore inescapable, is no more than

Max Beloff

THE INTELLECTUAL IN POLITICS AND OTHER ESSAYS

"*Professor Beloff is here in most of his familiar guises; as expert on Whitehall, as historian of Empire, as student of France and Russia, and as one who can write from his own knowledge and experience of the predicament of being Jewish* R. Q. Jones, Oxford Mail

To professional scholars the most valuable section will probably be that on foreign affairs, which contains four excellent pieces of historical research and an essay on the right of intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. Professor Beloff's study of the project for an Anglo-French union in June 1940, and that of the 'myth' of the Anglo-American 'special relationship' are both original and important Times Literary Supplement"

90s

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a slippery get-out for the Waughs and the Woolfs. Mr Eagleton's is a serious, rather polemic study of the writer's relationship with his time. He has a formidable critical apparatus which works best when turned on material of greater intrinsic richness than such frilled objects as *Decline and Fall*, the limited terrain of *Brighton Rock*, the attenuated melodrama of *A Burnt-Out Case*, or even the lower middle-class decencies of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. And so one is conscious in his treatment of these books of over-distended muscle, as well as a touch of provincial sourness. On Conrad, Yeats, Eliot and Lawrence, when his social anger and Lévi-Strauss structuralism are subdued, his patient examination of the text shows him to be an impressive critic. And after reading Philip Hobsbaum's *A Theory of Communication*[3] one realises that his book is solid and shapely too.

PHILIP HOBSBAUM has extraordinarily skittering verbal habits. His words don't slide along like the oil I began with or rub one roughly like Storm Jameson's stone; they don't even stand densely like Terry Eagleton's plain bricks. They are pebbles bouncing off the reader at disconcerting angles. Mr Hobsbaum proposes to himself three questions—Why do critics disagree? What makes one work of literature good and another bad? How does the effective work of literature communicate with its readers?—and this blend of largeness and naïveté mirrors his peculiarly innocent and immodest bearing. I cannot see any of the massive trio he claims as his masters, I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, W. Empson, taking on an assignment like this with any of Mr Hobsbaum's insouciance. His attitude of optimistic vitality may be suitable for a poet; it is not very sensible in a critic.

One theme extracted from the tumult of *A Theory of Communication* will illustrate the manner. After graduating, he explains, he sought "to take Leavis's approach into the modern sector." In 1955 he founded a creative writing group in London.

> All discussion derived from texts of poems or prose fictions, read by their authors, turn and turn about. . . . No effort was spared to find recruits for this Group. It was the reverse of a clique; the only criteria of entry were intelligence and seriousness. . . . There have been other gatherings of writers before, from the Mermaid Tavern to G. S. Fraser's soirées in the fifties; none, I think, so selective in clientèle or so systematically devoted to close perusal and discussion of the text. At length, in 1963, the Oxford University Press published a selection from the work of this Group—called, modestly enough, *A Group Anthology*. I cannot pretend that this compilation was favourably received. . . . The interesting thing is that individual members of the Group had already been separately recognised: the central figures were Peter Redgrove, Peter Porter, Martin Bell, Edward Lucie-Smith, George MacBeth and myself; and every one of us has had his advocates at one time or another. Why, then, was our anthology so savaged?

Having read the extensive verbatim quotations of these Group discussions, I cannot say that this is a question which would ever have occurred to me.

MR HOBSBAUM'S criticism, as the passage above will confirm, is riddled with self. Of course it is impossible for criticism, the articulation of one's reading, one's reaction to words, to be wholly purged of the subjective. But there are critical degrees of saturation and points of balance. Mr Allan Rodway's endeavour[4] is to keep us well in the safety zone, and in particular to bring in to what he calls intrinsic criticism, the reader's response to the text, more and firmer elements of objectivity, which he calls extrinsic criticism. Not that he conceives it possible for criticism to become a science or any kind of laboratory discipline. The law in his view is a better analogy. But his conscientious mental habits suggest more clearly than the lawyer, the housewife. His book is less a cool jurisprudence of the theory of criticism than a practical manual in the domestic science of the subject. He is sensible, thorough, robust and helpful, polishing up the terms, dusting the distinctions, spring-cleaning the *genres* and incinerating quantities of rubbish. Early on he is given pause by the fact that the best critics have by no means been equipped with theoretical understanding; and in any case what specific theory are they to equip themselves with?

> Why then, it is tempting to ask, bother with theory at all?

Mr Rodway's answer is that since we shall certainly have our presuppositions in any case, let us get them into order, establishing at least a minimum of agreement about meanings and terms. He is in favour of an inclusive or piecemeal theory, clearing up this or that critical crux, and opposed to absolutism and

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[3] *A Theory of Communication*. By PHILIP HOBSBAUM. Macmillan, 80s.

[4] *The Truths of Fiction*. By ALLAN RODWAY. Chatto & Windus, 45s.

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dogma, although his book doesn't always succeed in avoiding the theoretical critic's disposition to erect tiny glimpses of the obvious into universal truths. Mr Rodway failed to convince one reader that criticism needs to be based upon, or perhaps rather to be supported by, formal literary theory. The best criticism of the only great English critic who had a theory, Coleridge, had very little to do with his theory. Mr Rodway's treatment, however, certainly justifies the view that the theory of criticism is an interesting and valid subject in its own right, a branch of philosophy—ultimately inseparable from some wider, extra-literary philosophical position. I don't believe that mastering his definitions and equipping oneself with his system of procedures will add anything in force or delicacy to the critical practice of the most devoted student. But it will certainly enlarge his scope of reference and give him another entrance into a fascinating side of the history of ideas.

In speaking of students I find I have given an incidental answer to a narky question nagging away at me while reading these books. Who do they think they are talking to? as we used to say at school. It is pretty clear that Terry Eagleton, Philip Hobsbaum, Allan Rodway think they are talking to students when they are not addressing one another. There is a splendid phrase in P. N. Furbank's *Reflections on the Word Image*[5] which shows very clearly what a closed world, perhaps no larger than the lecture room, these writers occupy. "So I mustn't be understood as echoing Burke. . . ." The critical world may be closed as to audience but not as to ideas. Terry Eagleton brings them in from sociology and politics, Allan Rodway from philosophy and linguistics, Philip Hobsbaum from his autobiography. A measure of extra illumination is always useful and in so far as it connects what is going on more closely with something living, it is all to the good. P. N. Furbank's book, however, is an example, a crisp and agreeable example, of an idea generated from within. He spends his time reflecting nimbly and pointedly on what is implicit for him in the word "image." It is a pure example of the commerce of word and idea, two of I. A. Richards's trinity. His book has an internal structure based upon the vitality and richness of the idea it explores; and the logic which comes from progressively and lucidly elaborating the initiating concept. (In comparison Rodway's and Hobsbaum's books proceed by simple addition or apposition.)

He insinuates himself neatly into the original puzzle offered by the obscure connections of image with metaphor and simile on the one hand, and of image with mental imagery on the other; and from here he climbs back with elegant skill through the history of the uses of the word. We are genuinely illuminated by his discussion of this word (as by a set of similar reflections on the words "concrete" and "world"), about the nature of literature itself, a nature which is irremediably general and bound, therefore, to suffer an uneasy relationship with things.

> Literature . . . being general, struggles and yearns towards the particular; but the nearest it can get to it is to mime the action of attending to the particular.

Mr Furbank's touch, his easy and candid manner, his suppleness of procedure and his unforced and natural attitude are the instruments of an original approach and a real critical intelligence used in the pursuit of something alive and worthwhile. His is the most attractive book here. No one would think of him as echoing Burke, or imitating Hare for that matter.

[5] *Reflections on the Word Image.* By P. N. Furbank. Secker & Warburg, 63s.

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The Best of Dickens

By Shirley Chew

THE PURPOSE of this book[1] is "to enforce as unanswerably as possible the conviction that Dickens was one of the greatest of creative writers," that while continuing to be popular he became also a serious master of his art. To this end, so admirably achieved, Dr Leavis and Mrs Leavis draw our attention insistently to the novelist's concern from *Dombey and Son* onwards with "profound and basic realities of human experience," realities which are still with us however different the surfaces of contemporary experience may be.

In answering therefore the common charge of injustice and political ignorance made against Dickens on account of his image of the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*—a charge made as early as 1857 by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in a long truculent review of the novel,[2] Dr Leavis says:

> Whether or not the Circumlocution Office conveys an altogether fair criticism of Government and bureaucracy at the time of the Crimean War doesn't matter. Life always has to be defended, vindicated and asserted against Government, bureaucracy and organization—against society in that sense. The defence and assertion are above all the business of the artist.

It was the trenchancy and concentration with which Dickens directed his "defence and assertion" in *Hard Times* against the Gradgrind system that caused Leavis to acclaim it in *The Great Tradition* as possessing "all the strength of his genius, together with a strength no other of them can show—that of a completely serious work of art."

In *Dickens the Novelist* (which reproduces with changes the essay on *Hard Times* and that on *Dombey and Son* to be found originally in *The Sewanee Review*, 1962), such statements attesting to the novel's uniqueness in this respect have been replaced with others pointing to its more emphatic technique. Leavis sees that *Little Dorrit*, besides having at its deep centre the same significance as *Hard Times*, is "immensely more complex," with "the aboundingness and inexhaustible subtlety of the greatest art." His new essay on this novel, so equal to its scope and so alive to its insights, will surely remain unsurpassed.

In *Little Dorrit* Dickens is at once more comprehensive in his criticism of Victorian civilisation and more resourceful in his affirmation of life. And what Dickens means by "life", Leavis extracts convincingly from a close and penetrating engagement with the text. The word acquires a density of significance as the critic analyses Clennam's "necessity-impelled battle with the challenging questions," Little Dorrit's "ego-free love," Doyce's "disinterested scientific creativity," Flora's "exuberance" and Cavalletto's, Pancks's galvanic motions, and William Dorrit's brief moments of self-awareness which "make him for us something of a tragic figure." While depending on the controlling idea, this fullness owes itself to the energy of the prose as well. Leavis has commented before on the remarkable qualities of this prose. It is that which combines so successfully so many modes of dialogue in *Hard Times*, and which effects "a specious unity" of the disparate elements in *Dombey and Son*.

What strikes one impressively in reading these essays is the critics' acutely sensitive and considered response to the novelist's language—a response Dr Leavis seems to feel he can best call upon us to share by pointing liberally to the prose itself and by discovering for the passages reproduced the finest verbal realisations possible. "Aboundingness and inexhaustible subtlety" has already been referred to above, and there are others like "generously charged and delicately modulated chapter," "a mastery of inexplicitness," Pancks's "creative flights and felicities," Flora Finching's "copious unpredictabilities"—all of which have the desirable effect of sending one back to Dickens himself.

MRS LEAVIS is particularly enlightening in relating the development of David Copperfield, Esther Summerson, and Pip to the assumptions and pressures of the age. She analyses with lucid thoroughness the psychological compulsions behind David's marriage to Dora and then to Agnes, Esther's submissiveness, and Pip's sense of guilt and shame, and points out the insights Dickens makes available through his understanding of the problems of living they are faced with—an understanding which is found to be both informed and complex when the different destinies of David and Pip,

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[1] *Dickens the Novelist*. By F. R. LEAVIS and Q. D. LEAVIS. Chatto and Windus, 50s.

[2] *Charles Dickens—A Critical Anthology*. Ed. by STEPHEN WALL. Penguin Critical Anthologies, 12s.

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both deliberately conceived by the novelist as representative of their society, are compared. Mrs Leavis is in constant touch with the whole of Dickens's output, marking lines of cross-reference among the novels. Also interesting are the parallels she sets up between a number of Dickens's ideas and incidents and what appears similar in the works of his contemporaries, though in this respect there is a tendency to hazard suggestions of indebtedness which may amount to little more than a common interest in certain socially pertinent and artistically potential subjects. The following extract shows the gathering associations:

> . . . the presence of Dr Lydgate there (in *Middlemarch*) owes much to the scientifically-oriented doctor who dominates Carlingford in the earlier novel *(Miss Marjoribanks)*. Possibly also to the whole tradition going back to *Bleak House*, which had provided the form of a social microcosm which George Eliot uses in *Middlemarch*, except that she replaces London by a provincial town in the Midlands and that instead of Chesney Wold we have two contrasted estates and landlords. . . . The idea of putting a modern scientific medical man into such an uncompromising context had already been suggested by Kingsley, as I have shown.

MORE TO BE REGRETTED is that writing so packed with knowledge of the period and with firm, fresh perceptions of Dickens's intentions and achievements should show itself so peremptory in dismissing the work of other critics most of whom, from Stephen Wall's account, wrote with the same conviction of Dickens's greatness as a serious artist. It is in Mrs Leavis's section of the book too that more careful proof-reading might have been done, so that Fanny Price need not be said to figure in *Persuasion*, and Gillray might be spelled correctly throughout.

As stated in their preface, the critics, united though they are in essential purpose and in their opinion of the most profitable approach to Dickens, have naturally and necessarily revealed in the course of their writings different shades of response and varying stresses of judgment. So while Dr Leavis admits to finding Captain Cuttle boring in spite of his Dickensian qualities, Mrs Leavis considers it worthwhile to append a note on the same character relating him to Smollettian originals and to the larger meaning of *Dombey and Son*. From her account of Rosa Dartle Mrs Leavis would have been interesting on Edith Dombey with whom Dr Leavis is somewhat impatient. Lastly, while Dr Leavis thinks that *Bleak House* for all its virtues does not altogether solve Dickens's problem "of achieving the wholly significant work of art as

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a serial-writer," Mrs Leavis finds it "the most impressive and rewarding of all Dickens's novels, the most various and consistently lively *in style of writing and composition.*"

One is encouraged by this to think that however "unanswerably" the conviction of Dickens's greatness has been laid down, other ideas on his works will continue to appear. Perhaps Mrs Leavis has not said all, for instance, *that Dickens intended about Pip's* relationship with Joe. The latter's awkwardness must mainly be attributed to Pip's new constraint after London, inevitable though that may be—as the mature narrator realises. Joe and the forge hold all the old feelings of not having been good enough in the eyes of Mrs Gargery, the village bullies, and of course Estella. Moreover, before the disinterested goodness of Joe, Pip suffers a loss of gentlemanly ease, not unlike the occasions of larger awareness that William Dorrit and Fanny Dorrit experience before Little Dorrit. Significantly, no further strain is apparent in the relationship after Pip's penitent return or even after his subsequent absence of eleven years.

I should also like to refer to the passage in chapter xxxv of *Little Dorrit* which Dr Leavis has quoted and commented on at some length. William Dorrit's release being imminent, Little Dorrit is asking Arthur Clennam if her father, after so many years of imprisonment, has at last to pay all his debts as well. While entirely in sympathy with Leavis's response to Little Dorrit's tragic perception that life has been cruelly used to take the place of money (the force of "all those debts for which he has been imprisoned here, all my life, and longer?" is unmistakable and gains its special intensity from "all my life"), I feel that even so we are meant to realise "the confusion" here. The indictment of an inhuman system that shackles and wears out life must be made in terms of what happens to life alone. The payment of debts is another question altogether. The irony is that William Dorrit has already discovered his own pernicious interpretation for this—money-payment is to sever all claims that anyone from his past might think of making upon him in the future. That Little Dorrit should be consulting Clennam on this point is right since he is someone intent on expiating the money-guilt of the commercial ethos he has grown up in. His mother, in fact, he sees with partial insight as being engaged in a self-imposed attempt to repay with her life, imprisoned in a wheel-chair, whatever wrongs in terms of money she has been guilty of. I cannot think that Dickens who conscientiously paid his father's debts whenever John Dickens

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was in trouble did not intend the complexity behind this passage. One does not think the worse of Little Dorrit here just as one does not think the less of her when she fails to see how well her father, once released, would fit into society outside the prison walls. But one certainly thinks with Dr Leavis of Dickens's "inexhaustible subtlety."

Himalayan Blunder

On the Sino-Indian War—By MICHAEL EDWARDES

ON 20 October 1962, Chinese troops illegally occupying Indian territory in the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) launched an unprovoked attack on Indian troops as the prelude to an invasion of Assam. Simultaneously an assault was launched on the western end of the northern border, also from territory indisputably a part of India. In both sectors, the Indians, caught by surprise, were driven back. After a lull, the Chinese in NEFA reopened their offensive on 16 November, sweeping Indian troops before them towards the plains. Five days later, fearing reprisals from a now regrouped and revived Indian army supported by American air power, the Chinese announced that they would withdraw their troops from NEFA, beginning on 1 December.

That, briefly, is one Indian version of the Sino-Indian border affair of 1962, and the one most generally accepted. Peaceable, reasonable India. Chauvinist and expansionist China. "History", someone once wrote, "is the propaganda of the victors." Not this time apparently.

Yet for those unwilling to accept the simplistic view that the border "war" was an act of unprovoked aggression, there have been in the last couple of years a break or two in the darkness deliberately created by the Indian government and some of its friends abroad. Pleading "national security," the government in New Delhi refused to publish the Indian Army's own report on the events of 1962. Even though the commission of enquiry had been specifically banned from investigating the crucial relations between the civilian leadership and the army commanders, publication would seriously have damaged the Indian prime minister, Pandit Nehru, and his government. Despite its top secret classification, however, the contents of the report have become known and a number of books (published only in India) have revealed some of the story.[1] The sceptical, however, need no longer take their revelations piecemeal. The former New Delhi correspondent of the London *Times,* Neville Maxwell, has produced a sober, factual, and devastating study of the Sino-Indian dispute, placing it squarely in its historical, political and military contexts.[2]

Mr Maxwell's book will be disliked in certain circles in India, yet it is not anti-Indian. It will be equally disliked in certain circles in Washington and London, yet it is not pro-Chinese. Mr Maxwell, in fact, has almost fallen over backwards to avoid being either polemical or tendentious. His book, nevertheless, is a serious indictment not only of the dead but of the living, and it is not unlikely that attempts will be made to discredit him. Writers of contemporary history are particularly vulnerable, for their more telling revelations are often based on information which cannot be directly cited. The anonymous source is both a weakness and a necessity. Mr Maxwell was given access to unpublished files and reports of the government of India and the Indian Army by officials and officers who "believed that it was time a full account was put together", and who trusted him "to write it fairly." On the evidence of my own researches for a forthcoming political biography of Nehru, Mr Maxwell has fully justified that trust.

THE STORY TOLD in this well-documented study is a tragi-comedy. It would be easy to laugh at the pretensions and the behaviour of politicians playing soldiers if it were not for the fact that, as a result of them, real soldiers were sent into action against a vastly superior force in the depths of winter in some of the highest and most rugged country in the world, without adequate clothing and with obsolete weapons, at the mercy of the terrain, the weather, and the Walter Mitty fantasies of their most super-

[1] Among the more important of these are D. R. Manekar, *The Guilty Men of 1962* (Bombay, 1968); *Between the Lines* by Kuldip Nayar (Bombay, 1969). On the actual campaign in NEFA, *Chinese Invasion of NEFA* by Sita Ram Johri (Lucknow, 1968), and a work which deserves to become a military classic, *Himalayan Blunder* by J. P. Dalvi (Bombay, 1969).

[2] *India's China War.* By NEVILLE MAXWELL. Cape, £5.

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ior commanders. But it was not only the Indian Army that was broken in the wild hills of NEFA. The trauma of military defeat was to envelop Nehru's policy of non-alignment, his claim to international status within the Third World, and his moral authority within the ruling Congress party. For Nehru personally, it was the end of an illusion, and after the débâcle he retired more and more into a remote sadness. Krishna Menon, who as Defence Minister must bear much of the blame for the military disaster, recalled later of Nehru: "I think he collapsed; it demoralised him completely because everything that he had built up in his life was going . . ."

Mr Maxwell begins his study with a review of the historical evidence on India's northern frontier. He documents the simple fact that was constantly obscured by Indian claims, that the frontier was generally undemarcated, and that its alleged alignments were based on inadequate maps, dubiously legal treaties, mistranslations, and the legacies of British imperialism. When India became independent in 1947, it inherited all the ambiguities which in imperial times remained unresolved because there was no need to resolve them. The northern frontier of British India marched with a number of client states and a weak China. Any serious trouble on the frontier could easily be settled by sending a gunboat up the Yangtse. But by 1950 the situation was very different—independent India was weak, and China, revitalised by the Communist victories over Chiang Kai-Shek, was strong. Reluctantly, but with good sense—for military intervention by India was out of the question—Nehru acquiesced to the Chinese occupation of Tibet. For the old British policy, he substituted that of friendship with China. One of the results, the famous and carefully-nurtured policy of *Panchsheel* (the "Five Principles of Coexistence") was first enunciated in the preamble to the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet of 1954. Neither side raised the matter of their frontiers, and it would appear that Nehru himself decided that the boundary question would never be first raised by India. Nevertheless, some precautions were taken. The first of the *Panchsheel* principles called for mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. If India could effectively occupy the territory up to the claimed frontiers *before* China raised the subject, then China would be bound by the *Panchsheel* agreement to accept those frontiers as non-negotiable. The main problem was to decide which of the many arbitrary and undemarcated on-the-spot frontier alignments should be considered as non-negotiable. Al-

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most inevitably the most contentious were chosen. It was a fateful decision, for when the Chinese did raise the matter it led to a simple but rigid formula—willingness to talk but not to negotiate.

Mr Maxwell inexorably reveals the path to conflict. The decision to occupy territory up to the claimed frontier was all very well, but implementation was quite another matter. On the western end, in the Aksai Chin—assumed on very doubtful premises to be a part of India—the Chinese began to build a road from Sinkiang to Tibet in 1956. Except in a map published in 1954, the Indian government had made no formal claim to the area, nor, because of the difficulty of access from India, had they sent out border patrols to demarcate or set up posts on the frontier they claimed. When the government became suspicious about the road in 1957, it was decided to send Indian military patrols into the area. The suspicions were concealed not only from the Indian people but from the Indian cabinet. Apart from Nehru and a few top officials of the external affairs ministry, no one knew either of the suspicions or, indeed, of India's claims.

This reticence lasted until the discovery that the Chinese had actually built a road through what was claimed to be Indian territory. India protested to Peking in October 1958. From the diplomatic exchanges which followed, it is clear that, though in most sectors of the northern frontier the Chinese were prepared to accept existing boundaries, they insisted on doing so through new treaties free from imperialist overtones. It was not unreasonable. China had suffered more than any other Asian nation from imposed and unequal treaties, and their cancellation was, for the Chinese, a crucial catharsis —the murder of the past. The Chinese are, at least, consistent, for it is exactly the same attitude which today offends the Soviet Union in the dispute between the two countries over frontiers created by treaties imposed on China in Tsarist times. In the context of Nehru's known attitude to the "evils" of imperialism, India should have understood the Chinese view. Instead, China's wish to renegotiate the frontier was taken as a desire to alter the boundaries and an indication of aggressive intentions.

In correspondence with Chou En-lai, Nehru claimed that, as the boundaries were clearly set, there was nothing to negotiate about. In accepting a suggestion from Chou that, until agreement was reached, the status quo should be maintained, Nehru actually demanded—though in highly ambiguous language—that China should vacate any territory that it had recently occupied. After this correspondence,

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Nehru was committed to the line that, before any discussions took place, the position according to India must not only be accepted by the Chinese but actually created on the spot. Once this commitment was made public, Nehru was left without any room for manoeuvre.

SO THE STORY GOES ON—through the tribal rebellion in Tibet which led to the Dalai Lama's escape to India in March 1959, and the growth of jingoism in India, to the frontier incidents at Longju in August 1959 and in the western sector at the Kongka pass in October. By this time Indian "public opinion", *i.e.* that of the narrow political class of members of parliament and the readers of English-language newspapers, was pressing the government for information and displaying bellicose attitudes. Under this pressure, Nehru permitted publication of correspondence with Peking not only in the past but in the present. Such communications were henceforth made public almost as soon as they were delivered. In effect, what should have been secret diplomatic exchanges became primarily directed at public opinion in India and abroad. Nehru became not only the captive of the Indian parliament but of the articulate political élite. Any apparent concession to China, however pragmatic, would inevitably be condemned as appeasement, if not treason.

This restriction on the government's action was not clear at the time. To the Indian and international audience, Nehru appeared to be highly flexible. He repeated again and again that he was prepared to meet anyone, anywhere, for talks. At the same time he confused the issue by maintaining that India's borders were not negotiable! The contradiction, though recognised, was almost entirely ignored, especially outside India where opinion gradually hardened in favour of the Indian case. Because much of the world was prepared—even anxious—to think the worst of China, the ambiguity of Nehru's statements was pushed aside. Indians came to believe that they had not only right on their side but the mass of international opinion as well.

Mr Maxwell brings all this out in convincing detail. He calls this section "Collision Course", and it certainly moves with all the inevitability of some Greek tragedy. But there is much more to this book than an analysis of the weaknesses of Pandit Nehru, crucial though they are to any understanding of this sad affair. Here are assembled all the minor characters. Krishna Menon, the scapegoat for Nehru, keeping the army weak out of fear, perhaps, that it might one day learn a lesson from its counterpart in Pakistan and take over the government, appointing his own feeble men to places of authority. The timid, high-ranking soldiers, too weak to resist the politicians' demands for a forward policy which the army was totally unfitted to carry out. The pathetic—indeed, almost sad—figure of General Kaul, the sorcerer's apprentice caught up in a magic he was unfitted to understand.[3] And there is the background, the Cold War, the Cuban missile crisis, the swift but calculated response of the United States and Britain to the call for help.

Though Mr Maxwell is cool and scholarly—he marshals the evidence expertly and makes no excuses for anyone, including the Chinese—the drama breaks through and its central figure is Nehru. When Mahatma Gandhi called off one of his first non-violent non-cooperation campaigns against the British because it had degenerated into violence, he recognised that his decision to start the campaign had been a "Himalayan blunder." Nehru, Gandhi's political heir, did *not* recognise his, and was crushed by it. The repercussions of that tragedy are still being felt in the India of today.

[3] Kaul has published his own apologia; anything but frank, but still very revealing: *The Untold Story* by Lt.-Gen. B. M. Kaul (Bombay, 1967).

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Nature v. Nurture Once Again

By F. A. Hayek

AFTER his authoritative *Genetics and Man* (1964) Dr C. D. Darlington has now given us a magnificent account of *The Evolution of Man and Society*. This monumental work is bound to have great influence on many who will never trouble to study the former. What is here brought together on the origin of cultivation of plants and animals, the effects of disease, the significance of blood groups, and the recurrent destruction by man of the environment from which he draws his sustenance is a veritable treasure house of fascinating information. If Professor Max Beloff had not already given here (ENCOUNTER, October), a full account of the scope of the work, I should not wish to turn to criticism before dwelling at length on the merits of this contribution of a biologist to the understanding of history. But it seems to me necessary more explicitly to examine a crucial issue on which the book is likely to give a misleading impression and with which Professor Beloff deals only by implication.

The point I want to consider here is whether in looking at history from the special point of view of the geneticist, Dr Darlington has not much exaggerated the importance of the factor in which he is chiefly interested. All history is to him grist to his genetic mill which in all instances except those of one-egged twins turns out individuals born with distinct innate capacities which decisively determine their actions.

As a reaction against the behaviourist views expounded forty years ago, *e.g.* in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, according to which "at birth human infants, regardless of heredity, are as equal as Fords", this is most refreshing. But true appreciation of the genetic factor is hardly assisted by ascribing to it more than it is really capable of explaining adequately. Dr Darlington greatly extends what he feels must be ascribed to genetic transmission by the simple device that all actions that are not guided by conscious reason must be genetically determined. He operates with the simple dichotomy between, on the one hand, the genetically determined, innate, instinctive, or unconscious capacities (terms which are treated as equivalent), and, on the other hand, rational or learned activities.

I take it that by "rational" Dr Darlington means purposive action based on conscious insight into the relations between cause and effect, or what Professor Gilbert Ryle called "knowledge that." If so, there is certainly no justification for assuming that what is not rational must be innate and genetically determined. There is no ground for supposing that those attributes which are normally transmitted only from parents are all transmitted genetically. "Breeding" in the sense of upbringing includes much more than begetting. As Dr Darlington duly stresses, man's most distinguishing characteristic is his prolonged infancy, which presumably includes a correspondingly increased capacity of learning by imitation. Most of an individual's aptitudes, propensities, and skills are probably acquired in early infancy, and firmly entrenched by the time he becomes capable of rational thought. These learned action patterns are not tools which he consciously selects, but rather properties in accordance with which he will be selected by a process which nobody controls.

WE STILL KNOW VERY LITTLE about the process of learning by perceiving and imitating, especially by the small child. I know of no systematic study of the extent to which children resemble foster parents in their unconscious behaviour patterns. But the importance of this sort of pre-rational learning can hardly be doubted. While apparently the higher apes "ape" very little, man must have early developed a great capacity for imitating, that is, of translating perceived into performed movements. This may indeed have been one of the most important steps in the development

PROFESSOR FRIEDRICH A. HAYEK *lectured for many years at the University of London and then at Chicago, and is now living in Salzburg, Austria. Among his books are: "The Road to Serfdom (1944), "The Counter-Revolution of Science" (1952), "Capitalism and Historians" (1954), "The Constitution of Liberty" (1960), and most recently, "Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics" (1967).*

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of his brain. I should not be surprised if we were to discover that something analogous to "imprinting" played a great role in this connection. Once such an innate capacity for learning by imitation is acquired, the transmission of abilities takes a new form—vastly superior to genetic transmission precisely because it includes the transmission of acquired characters which genetic transmission does not.

MAN IS CLEARLY genetically adapted to this learning process which he must undergo before he is capable of maintaining himself. But we must not confuse the inherited capacity to learn a great variety of modes of conduct with an heredity of particular modes of conduct. Nor must we confine "learning" to what the child is explicitly taught. Much that is learned certainly is not rational or conscious, but, in the loose and incorrect use of these terms, "intuitive" or even "instinctive." Neither the individual who provides the example, nor the imitator will be able to state what is merely "knowledge how", or know what depends on his acting in this particular manner. Much of what we can do rests on skills or aptitudes or propensities acquired by following examples, and selected because they proved successful, but not deliberately chosen for a purpose.

This process of cultural evolution follows in many respects the same pattern as biological evolution. As the late Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders explained nearly fifty years ago:

> Men and groups of men are naturally selected on account of customs they practise just as they are selected on account of their mental and physical characteristics.

And, as Sir Alister Hardy has shown recently, culturally transmitted patterns may in turn contribute to determine the selection of genetic properties. The processes of cultural and of genetic evolution will thus constantly interact, and their respective influence will be very difficult to distinguish.

Cultural evolution, because it also rests on a sort of natural selection, looks very much like biological evolution. Both are likely to produce the results which Dr Darlington stresses, or to operate by "hybridisation", "recombination", "assortative mating", or "stratification." The "breeding systems" whose significance Dr Darlington emphasises exclusively with reference to the genetic effects are equally important for both forms of evolution. For instance, inbreeding among a group living for generations in the same environment will be apt to lead to the loss of previously possessed skills if failure to transmit them has no deleterious effects on those who have to do without them; but it will disable them from coping with a changed environment, irrespective of whether the transmission of these skills is effected genetically or culturally.

Cultural transmission has however one great advantage over the genetic: it includes the transmission of acquired characters. The child will acquire unconsciously from the example of the parent skills which the latter may have learnt through a long process of trial and error, but which with the child become the starting point from which he can proceed to greater perfection.

It is curious that Dr Darlington, in his endeavour to play up the genetic aspect, should do less than justice to the comprehensive character of the general principle of evolution, and overlook that it extends far beyond biology—and, incidentally, was used in the Theories of Language and Law long before it was applied to biology. He does not explicitly discuss the distinction which his fellow-biologists, Sir Julian Huxley and Dr Theodosius Dobzhansky, have made between the biological and the "psycho-social" or "super-organic" modes of evolution; perhaps these were not very fortunate terms. And I am not surprised if he should not trust the sociologists properly to develop the theory of cultural evolution since some of them have indeed talked much nonsense about it. But to exclude the *cultural* aspect of evolution and claim almost everything for *genetic* transmission surely is doing violence to the subject. Dr Darlington has certainly not proved the

> universal dependence of the exchange and transmission of ideas and aptitudes on the exchange and transmission of genes.

One might have hoped from a work like this that it would provide us with a criterion or test by which we can recognise what is genetically determined or which of the features on which our culture depends are conditioned by innate properties of the individuals. But on this question the author lets us down. So far as I can see he does not demonstrate at any point that the operative sort of inheritance shows any of the specific characteristics of genetic inheritance, such as the exclusion of acquired characters or Mendelian distributions, though he sometimes writes as if he had done so. It may well be that, *e.g.* the "gift for narrative" of the Irish requires a special genetic factor; but the suggestion that the resemblance of the Etruscan Lion at Vulci to some Hittite work almost 1000 years older shows that "the

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genetic continuity overrides the cultural discontinuity" is to me not very convincing. It would be very helpful if we had a test to decide such questions, but I fear that in the present state of knowledge we can hardly hope for one. If we had, it would probably show how precarious the stability of our present civilisation is, precisely because it rests largely on cultural traditions which can be more rapidly destroyed than the genetic endowment of populations.

ALL THESE ARE comparatively minor points which little affect the merits or even the chief conclusions of the book. If the amendments which seem to me necessary were made, these conclusions would not become much more palatable to some of our professional egalitarians, such as the reviewer in the *New Statesman,* to whom Dr Darlington's work appeared as a "profoundly reactionary book." The conclusions may seem only just a little less dismal to them if it is admitted that acquired cultural achievements are passed on by processes which are not genetic, and that growing up within a particular family rather than physical descent may be the more important factor. But what Dr Darlington says about such phenomena as stratification, or the secondary importance of that part of the environment which we can manipulate, would still remain true.

On the whole we must probably conclude, as does Sir Gavin de Beer in a book on a similar theme (*Streams of Culture,* New York, 1969) which appeared about the same time as Dr Darlington's, that the old controversy between "Nature" and "Nurture" ought to be allowed to die because "it is necessary to regard both nature and nurture as cooperating, without our being able to say in any one case exactly how much has been contributed by either. . . ."

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Japan

Where's the Emperor's Tea Water?

By Christopher Driver

JAPAN IS: insular, productive, crowded, indulgent to children. Japan is not: as beautiful as it was, as confident as it seems, as short of labour as it pretends. These, you think after the first few days, are some safe generalisations. But hold the chord in suspension, and out of the air dissonant particulars begin to fall. That young girl over there by the department store escalator, bowing to every customer who sets foot on it: what does she produce? In a country where authority is motherly, personal hygiene obsessive, and public spaces crammed, why are people so careless about litter? First revision: Japan must be the land that is and is not: polite, and rude; strong, and weak; content, and fearful; a country whose manic energy expresses now the consumer, now the consumptive.

OCTOBER IS THE GENTLEST MONTH; the season of maple leaves, matsutake, and matrimony, when the summer heats have gone and the breezes stir, but the sun remains.

Maple. Koyasan is an apparently self-sustaining town of temples, schools, souvenir shops and a university, 3,000 feet up in the hills south of Osaka. The sociologist Michio Nagai, but for whom I might never have known about the place, likened it to "a Buddhist Cambridge" and watched ironically to see how I took so daring a proposition. Koyasan, where the priests of Kobo Daishi's Shingon sect have lived and been buried since 816 A.D., is a place for green thought in the sombre green shade of miki pine and cryptomeria, splashed here and there with maple-red. After a night in a temple, with a sonorous mass at 6 a.m. followed by soup and rice for breakfast, the senses are finely tuned for a morning walk—and look, across that garden wall, where the leaves of a maple tree flutter nervously as hostesses round a squat, smiling stone Buddha, clearly used to nothing but the best. It is a ready-made haiku subject, but the form, so challenging in Japanese, is too easy in English. Later, I was shown one of Basho's onomatopoeic masterpieces, carved on a moss-eaten stone in the cemetery:

Chichi haha no
Shikirini koishi
Kizi no koe
(When I hear the pheasants call I remember my parents).

MATSUTAKE. After the black truffles of the Perigord, this must be the world's most expensive fungus. It grows only in red pine woods during October and November, when the shaggy caps on their misshapen stalks heave their way up through the pine needles, vigorous as volcanoes, unpredictable as erections. They are preserved as strictly as game is in England, and by the time they reach Tokyo and Osaka, and have been heaped up on plastic grass in the food basements of department stores, they cost about £5 a lb. Affluent the Japanese may be, but few of them are as affluent as that. Every now and then, someone from the shuffling crowd in the shops bends down for a quick sniff of that woody fragrance. It is the more precious, perhaps, because it is wholly natural, a free gift from a part of Japan's land surface that is impossible to plough.

Towards agriculture as such, contemporary Japanese are much less deferent. The farmers are too successful. Once, Korea was the granary of Japan; now, Japan sells rice to Korea, and still has a surplus whose disposal is a major domestic problem. (Someone suggested that it could be put into rubberised containers and buried in Lake Biwa till a leaner year arrived. The experiment was tried, but the rice was spoilt.) Success has brought with it the morality of agri-business the world over. A friend of mine down in Kagoshima was offered a satsuma by a local

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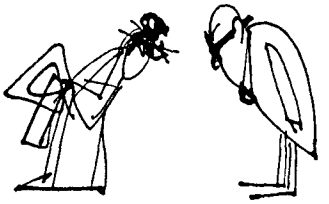
grower. The man assured him that it came from his private plot. The others, the ones he sent to market, had been heavily treated with pesticides, and he did not care to eat them.

MATRIMONY. In today's Japan, there are a million marriages every year, only a quarter of them arranged by the traditional go-between. The post-Hiroshima babies will not be denied their chance of breeding, and in the coolly delightful October weather, on the old calendar's "auspicious days," kimono'd and dark-suited wedding groups clamber in and out of taxis at wedding halls. They carry with them parcels, all of the same shoe-box size, lavishly wrapped by Takashimaya or Mitsukoshi. By their attendance, they bankrupt their wretched hosts, who may have mortgaged their pensions on a million-yen reception at a prestigious (favourite epithet in Japanese - English) hotel. For the new couples' sake, the *Japan Times* "regrets that the environmental conditions in our overcrowded land are not better." That problem has only been solved by the Kappas. According to Japanese folklore, the Kappa is a child-sized creature with scales, a tiger's face, and a sharply-pointed beak. It lives in rivers and drags unwary children to their deaths, but as long as the indentation on the top of its head is filled with water, it can also live on land. The Kappa was revived by Ryünosuke Akutagawa to give its name and character to a short, Gulliver-like satire which he published in 1927, the year of his own suicide.[1] The Kappa, Akutagawa reported, attends his wife in childbirth, and putting his lips to the orifice through which the baby will emerge, inquires in a loud voice: "Is it your desire to be born into this world, or not? Think seriously about it before you reply." Often the answer is a curt no, and the pregnancy abruptly subsides. If God had thought of that, he would surely have arranged it.



THE CHILDREN of post-war Japan breed, but if contemporary Japanese fiction is any guide, a preoccupation with deformity is still working itself out in them. The guide is an inexact one, for translation time-lags are serious, but deformity is a central theme of Kobo Abé's *The Face of Another* and Kenzaburo Oë's *A Personal Matter*. Abé's novel is a psychological horror story whose narrator, his face scarred by some unexplained laboratory accident, fashions for himself an elaborate mask as a disguise from society, friends, wife, and ultimately self. The image of the dexterously-made mask, which conceals less than the maker supposes, seems in Japan an especially powerful image of social life. Abé's sense of outraged order, of moral emptiness exacerbating a physical disaster, is scrupulously confined to the narrator's personal circumstances until, near the end, he refers to a film-shot of a beautiful young girl, seen in profile as she glides down a street near a wall. At every right hand intersection she darts across, and the film discloses the hideous keloid scars which disfigure that side of her face. Only when she comes to the veterans' mental institution, where she works, does her step lighten, as though she were at home.

Likewise in Oë's book, nuclear testing and the Japanese Left's agitation about it are depicted as external events to which Bird, who is an ineffectual college lecturer, and his mistress Himiko are comparatively indifferent. The birth of a deformed child to Bird's wife is not ascribed to anything but chance, and is treated as a strictly "personal matter" whose weight falls not on the wife (as it would in any Western version) but on Bird and Himiko. Their tension-solving and decision-making, in the gritty humidity of modern Tokyo, are described in language which contrasts sharply with the preciousness that one associates with older Japanese writers like Kawabata and even Mishima. It is no surprise to be told by his superb translator, John Nathan, that Oë's significance in Japanese literature is stylistic as well as generational, political and affective. His prose, according to some Japanese critics, "reeks of butter," which is a way of saying that he has corrupted the purity of the language with Western constructions. But that is its excitement. It seems scanda-

[1] An enterprising British publisher, Peter Owen, has just issued Geoffrey Bownas' translation of *Kappa* (36s.).

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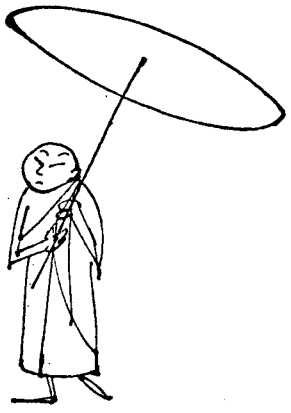
lous that apart from this Grove Press edition of *A Personal Matter* in America two years ago, Oë should be completely unknown outside Japan. He won the Akutagawa Prize in 1958, as a 23-year-old student of French Literature at Tokyo University. Since then he has published eight novels and a deal of New Left pamphleteering, and his collected works have sold a million copies. The British export more books to Japan than to any other country except the United States and Australia. It is a pity that they cannot import some Japanese literacy in exchange.

FOR AN ORDINARY YOUNG CHILD in Japan, life is deceptively easy. Fed or at least comforted on demand, and carried in harness on mother's back, head lolling asleep, long after a British child would be forced to toddle, he can have no inkling of the disciplined existence ahead of him. In the subway, if there is only one seat, he takes it, and mother or grandmother stands. But the prison-house shades cluster early and deep. Six is hardly too soon to start on the meritocratic grind. Young Ryo's "education mama" may want for him a good job in the Civil Service or the Bank of Japan.



For that he must go to the right high school and for that to the right junior school and even kindergarten, with if possible a few well-placed friends to help him on his way. Many such students are burnt-out cases by the time they arrive at university, and since graduation is virtually automatic and the quality of teaching a disappointment, the months during which famous campuses were closed by student revolts were not all lost. Travelling back by train across the Soviet Union, I met several Japanese students who claimed—as students everywhere do—that foreign travel was much more instructive than classes.

The Japanese are unnatural enough to prefer children to dogs. In Kyoto, one young professor of English Literature who had been able to spend a year in England told me that nothing had reconciled him to the dogs. He was fond of walking in the countryside, but every farmhouse had been a terror to him, and he had actually been bitten once or twice. In Cambridge, he had been pinned in a corner behind his bicycle by an aggressive hound whose owner, when she came up, had walked on without a word of apology. While he was in residence there, an Alsatian in the town had savaged and killed a two-year-old child in a pram outside the mother's home. Later, at a Cambridge tea party, he had expressed horror at this incident, and one of the cultivated women present had replied that perhaps the child had been teasing the dog. "It was," my friend said, "the cruellest remark I have ever heard."

For a Japanese child, a likelier death would be at the wheel of a savage car. Everyone has heard of the Japanese train system, and especially of the "bullet train" which runs on the New Tokaido Line from Tokyo to Osaka, with its remote control, insistent service, and seats ergonomically designed—for Japanese backs. One hears less often that the Japanese road system, apart from a few Tokyo expressways already inadequate for the traffic, is at a 1930 stage of development. It is up-to-date only in its car population and in the unplanned blight of overhead wires, drive-in restaurants, and billboards. An average speed of 20 m.p.h. is good going on provincial main roads, and the foreigner needs to remind himself that if he is so unfortunate as to kill someone in the narrow street of an ill-lit village, Japanese custom demands that he present his apologies to the relatives in person, or face a very expensive court action. In Tokyo, most visitors travel by taxis, which are among the cheapest in the world—but this is partly because they are generally driven by the latest arrivals from the country, who do not know where they are, nor where they are going. Neither, of course, do you. Man may be able to land on a sixpence when he reaches the moon, but in the largest city on earth, an address is not a pinpoint, but only an approximate guide to the postman. Buildings in a district are numbered, not in geographical sequence, but in chronological order of construction.

ONE JAPANESE Christian observer of his fellow-countrymen said that they would get around to naming and numbering

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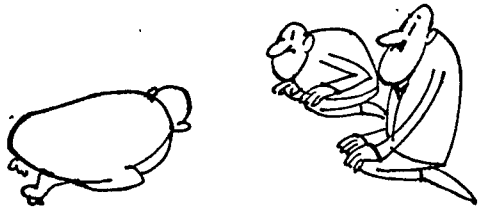
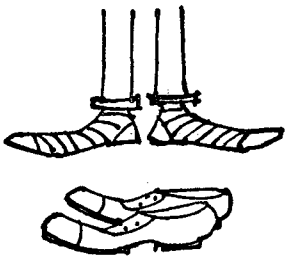
streets when they could work out how to do it in a Japanese way. Their reluctance belongs to the eternal dialogue between man and nature, form and growth, which in Japan has been expressed in a manner neither Western nor wholly Eastern. Christian cultures master nature, humbly at first, thanking God for his bounty, but later arrogantly, as they learn to control the waywardness of crops and beasts. Eastern cultures are more accepting: if a crop fails, the Indian peasant may well plant another (if he has the seed) without seeking a reason for the failure. Japan, from time immemorial till now, has been poor, her mountains unploughable. Her feudal lords were small-time chieftains whose monuments bear no comparison for splendour with those of the Moguls or the Medicis. But when Japan began to develop, a century ago, she needed the mentality of industrialism as well as the hardware, and the secret of its acquisition lies partly in her tradition of literacy, partly in her attitude to nature. The Japanese have only recently learnt to dominate nature, but they never yielded to it; instead, they harmonised with it, reducing it to a human scale. (The traditional basic unit of land measurement in Japan, the *tsubo,* measures just over three square metres, and could itself be subdivided into hundredths, called *shaku.*) They made a ceremony of their poverty. Consider the tea-bushes which one sees from the Tokyo-Osaka train: low, dark-green humps clipped as though by an expert topiarist—one could ask them, as sensibly as one could ask the girl by the department store escalator, what they produce. There is an answer: they produce the material for the conduct of civilised intercourse with limited resources in a confined space. Tea, says Okakura Kakuzo, became more than an idealised form of drinking; "it is a religion of the art of life."

THE PRINCIPLES OF REVERENCE and economy that derive from this national characteristic are half-buried now, after a century in which the



Japanese have first imitated and now improved upon Western models. But they can still be disinterred. The Japanese, for instance, are justly accused of a certain indifference to suffering, especially animals. Yet there is another side. Outside a famous *kobayaki* restaurant on a coastal headland stands a monument to all the



eels which have perished there for human gratification. The Japanese woman who told me this also described to me the happiest week in her life. She was fifteen, and spending a late summer holiday in a family hut in a peach orchard. Nearby ran a stream stocked with a rare and delicious species of trout, which fed on a certain moss found in that stream and few others. In the hut, the *tatami* was hopping with fleas, but she did not mind too much, for in early morning she would jump up, run down to the stream in her pyjamas, immerse herself, and watch the fleas float away to be gobbled up by the fish. She then ate the fish for dinner, and completed a natural cycle. Who is to say that the Japanese genius for miniaturisation and production management has nothing to do with this feeling for economy in effort and resources?

Today, the old harmony of man and landscape is disfigured, and the journey down the 53 way-stations on the old Tokaido line from Edo (as Tokyo used to be called) to Osaka—the journey which less than a century ago inspired a famous series of Hiroshige prints—would today be a heart-rending experience, though the fleas which marred Isabella Bird's research for her *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*[2] have long since disappeared from Japanese inns. There is no progress without price. If only, the Japanese seem to say as they dive into department stores for pointless presents or scurry round the city on make-work errands for their employers—if only someone would show us a way of life that is at once efficient yet distinctively, satisfyingly Japanese. The tribulations of the war and its aftermath cured them of looking for guidance to soldiers and politicians. Wealth and secularisation have numbed their interest—never more than Laodicean—in religion, and a Tokyo temple which has no appeal to tourists thinks itself lucky if it can let its courtyard for commuters' car

[2] London, 1880 (2 vols.). A biography of this intrepid Victorian traveller has just been published; *A Curious Life for a Lady* by Pat Barr (Macmillan: John Murray, 4 gns.). But for close-packed detail, the original must be sought.

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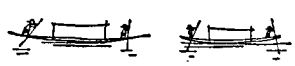
parking. Until the campus turbulence of the last few years, Japan put its hope of salvation on to the *sensei* (professor), the intellectual heir of the *samurai*. Professors, simply because they were professors, were expected to have something useful to say in the public prints on anything from natural disasters to arranged marriages. Fortunately for their incomes, which would otherwise be pitiful, magazine commissions still arrive. But now that professors are visibly incapable of solving their own problems, they are less consulted about other people's.

TWO KINDS OF WESTERNER revel in Japan. One kind are the poets, Zen men, simple lifers, seekers after the harmony which the Japanese themselves are losing: people like Bernard Leach the potter, or Gary Snyder the poet, whose *Earth House Hold* was written in Tokyo and instantly became a campus best-seller on the American West Coast. The other kind are the professional world-adjusters who see Japan as a ready-made laboratory of urban ecology. Tokyo, like New York, is on the verge of environmental collapse. Only a fifth of the population of the megalopolis can flush their wastes away, and if the proportion equipped were higher, there would not be enough water to fill the closets. But the Japanese do not lack sanitary inventiveness. In one Tokyo home, I was invited to admire a lavatory cistern which filled, not from a hidden pipe at the back, but from an open one above, at chest level. One flushed, and washed one's hands in the water as it ran into the cistern to be ready for the next man. That is Japanese. It seemed appropriate, next morning, to listen over breakfast in International House to an urban ecologist from Berkeley booming away to a Japanese colleague about what the Apollo programme had done for human waste disposal: "For a long inter-planetary trip, some form of re-cycling from men to plants to animals to men would be necessary. Now if we could magnify that process up for a whole town in Thailand, let's say . . ." If we could, the listener was surely thinking, we would have something truly elegant, truly Japanese. There is a subway station close to the centre of Tokyo called—after the once-pure stream that runs nearby—*Ochanomisu*, the Emperor's Tea Water. Project Ochanomisu: it has a distinct ring. Ecologists, advance—or as Isaiah put it long ago, "Ho, every one that thirsteth."



LETTERS

Passmore's "Paradise Now"

PROFESSOR JOHN PASSMORE'S article "Paradise Now" [ENCOUNTER, November] is challenging and thought-provoking. But it takes for granted a crucial point which is the very foundation of his argument, *i.e.* the claims of the new mystics. This fact however becomes effectively concealed, for the article proceeds from what is almost casually assumed as a basic truth without the writer saying so. The result is that there are several deceptively subtle loopholes in the argument. What I am driving at is this: unless the reader makes a diligent effort to think about it, he is liable to remain unaware of the fact that Professor Passmore proceeds to examine critically the merits and demerits of the "new mystics' " claims without pausing to ascertain as to what extent the self-appellation of "mystics" is justified. One cannot help feeling that it *because* the "new mystics" claim themselves to be the spiritual descendants of the "old mystics" that Professor Passmore is stimulated to trace the genealogical links between them. In short, this is the form of the argument: *B* claims that his ideas are a new version of *A*'s old ones. *Therefore* we proceed to look for the similarities between the two sets of ideas. Needless to say, similarities, however complex and questionable, may become magnified, and dissimilarities, however fundamental, may be simply overlooked, owing to this false start.

To begin with, the writer points out that the " 'new mystics' . . . *think of themselves* as inheriting the tradition of . . . mysticism." So far so good. A little later, however, while mentioning Freud's proposition that man had either civilisation or unrepressed enjoyment to choose, he goes on to state that one of the "neo-mystics" throws in his lot with the latter, "*in the typical mystical fashion.*" Again, he says, drug-taking is one of the instances "in which *ancient mystical ideals reappear* in a more explicitly physical guise." But in the same breath: "again and again . . . addicts *use language* which compellingly reminds us of mysticism and stoicism." Perhaps it is a little more than *language* which unites the two preoccupations? "But the fact remains," he asserts, "that the old language seemed to fit their new experiences like a glove." Surely identical language does not necessarily convey identical experience?

STILL, WHAT IS IMPORTANT is that Professor Passmore has made an attempt to establish a number of links between traditional mysticism and the modern cults under consideration. So we may as well go along with him to consider whether the links he traces do really exist. There is no problem

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regarding the practices the mystics and the modern claimants to that art follow. The writer recognises that they are vastly different. For the "moderns", "the road to Paradise . . . does not involve a prolonged agony of the soul; all one need do is to take off one's pants." But are the ends the same? Professor Passmore labours to show that they are. There is no doubt, he thinks, "that the new mystics enunciate familiar themes, but from a new, bodily point of view." But the important point is that as soon as the emphasis becomes "bodily", it ceases to be the old, "familiar" theme. It becomes a theme diametrically contrary to what many traditional mystics sang about. For them, all "mundane" reality (including the body) was phantasmal, veiling a Beauty that was both beyond and different from material existence. What is more, it was inaccessible to sensuous apprehension, leave alone being a sensual exuberance. Thus, the two quests are fundamentally divergent—though, in certain respects, deceptively parallel. Many a "traditional" mystic, if he were alive, would feel outraged by the suggestion that what he was aiming at was "direct sensuous enjoyment, unconfined, unrepressed." *His* retort would be that what he was seeking was direct "spiritual" (i.e. non-material) happiness, accompanied by an unconfined and unrepressed state of the celebrated "inner faculty", and, therefore, by a *repressed* state of solely physical instinct. Again, Henry Miller's Apocalyptic declaration that the true adventure is that which proceeds "inwards towards the self, and for that, time nor space nor even deeds matter", sounds, at first hearing, as a faithful echo of the mystics. But then what he is getting at comes out in its true colours: "to embark on that 'adventure', men must not go forward but backwards . . . into a super-infantile realm of being"—and for him, presumably, just as much as for Norman Mailer, " 'Be' is used as a synonym for sexual enjoyment."

Now this is *not* the hall-mark of the mystics! True enough, the mystic has generally been known to be hankering after an "Everlasting Now", but *not* in order that he may avoid being worried about "the future of the woman he seduces." True enough, again, the mystic does yearn for what can be aptly expressed as "transcendental awareness." He does *not* yearn for "spontaneous play", except if this is used as a poetically affectionate phrase for union with God. As for "physiological reflexes", he is not only indifferent but positively inimical to gross physical titillation, convinced that it is only through triumph over it that he gains access to the "higher world" he longs for. Finally, of course, mystics are well known for their strange love of solitariness, and unlike the modern enthusiasts who have boldly adopted them as ancestors, they did *not* seek community or togetherness. Even when, in the style of the former, they reacted against "institutions", they were not less but more religious, and were thus acting firmly from *within* an over-all religious frame-work. This is the opposite of the "perfectabilistic" urge for an "un-ordered" community.

IN SHORT, THIS IS very much a matter of language. What the traditional mystics sought was indeed a transcendental state—a state which was thought to be attainable after an arduous process of rising above ordinary physical and mental activity, not through dropping activity altogether. Such a preoccupation, contrary to what Professor Passmore claims, *does* enlarge consciousness. After all, is it not what art too sets out to achieve? For in the pointed climactic moment of artistic activity, the artist, in a flash of illumination, finds that he has achieved what has aptly been called an "inscape" into life. What the modern enthusiasts, whether they are after a state of erotic abandonment or drug-ecstasy, seize from the mystics, is the vague "thrill" of their poetry of intensity and excess. The mystics sing of the repose they attain, or hope to attain, at the end of a long and arduous journey, sometimes consisting of self-maceration but in most cases accompanied by stringent ethical discipline. The more naïve of the new disciples hear news of this repose, get rapidly impressed, and unpack there and then, refusing to undertake any journey whatsoever.

AZIZ ESMAIL

University of Edinburgh

IT IS, OF COURSE, possible so to define mysticism that it applies only to the search for spiritual unity with God, the mysticism I have described and discussed at some length in earlier chapters of my book, *The Perfectibility of Man*. Then it at once follows that the so-called new mystics are not mystics at all; they are simply mistaken in supposing that the traditional mystics were in any sense their spiritual ancestors. But there is a broader sense of mysticism in which it is marked by a search for timelessness, for freedom from care, for direct union with the total whole, for a relationship in which there is no mediation, no barrier, no anxiety—in my technical language, a "play" relationship.

This, I think, is what the traditional mystic was looking for—I judge this from the language he uses, having no other way of judging what he is saying—even if he also believes that these objectives can be obtained only by union with a Divine Being, as distinct, let us say, from a total human community.

As for what Mr Esmail says about artists, certainly the artist, like the scientist or the philosopher, needs "flashes of illumination". But the work of art, or the work of science, or the work of philosophy, is not itself such a flash; speaking as a philosopher, I only wish it were. The mystic professes to enlarge men's consciousness by moving above and beyond consciousness. I have argued, on the contrary, that it is impossible to move above or beyond consciousness; when one thinks one is doing so, one is actually going *below* consciousness.

JOHN PASSMORE

All Souls College, Oxford

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America's Destiny

THE DYNAMIC of American foreign policy is a sense of moral superiority, rather than the reasons given by Mr Richard Pipes ["Russia's Mission, America's Destiny", ENCOUNTER, October 1970]. This goes back to the 18th century and was voiced repeatedly by such men as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.

It was put into rather flowery language at the turn to the 20th century. William Allen White, editor of the Emporia (Kansas) *Gazette*, wrote: "It is the Anglo-Saxon's *manifest destiny* to go forth as a world conqueror. He will take possession of the islands of the sea. . . . This is what fate holds for the chosen people."

A year later, in 1900, Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana exclaimed: "God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has made us master organisers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. . . . He has marked the American people as His chosen instrument to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America. . . ."

This led us into World War I with a bright missionary hope, and once again in World War II to save the world, we thought. John Foster Dulles gave this theological enamel to the Cold War.

The present crisis in American foreign policy is simply that the dream of moral superiority looks pretty shoddy as we destroy non-combatants, their villages and farms in Indochina.

Another facet of the crisis is that Mr Richard Nixon believes, with apparent sincerity, that he must save the world from Communism, and to many of his countrymen looks like a ridiculous Don Quixote.

TRISTRAM COFFIN

Chevy Chase,
Maryland.

THE SENTIMENTS Mr Coffin cites strike me as less characteristic of the American tradition than of the mood of the *fin de siècle* civilised world. "In every nation of Europe from England and France to Russia and Turkey," Gilbert Murray wrote in 1900, "in almost every nation of the world from the Americans and the Chinese and the Finns, the same whisper from below the threshold sounds incessantly in men's ears. 'We are the pick and flower of nations: the only nation that is really generous and brave and just. We are above all things qualified for governing others; we know how to keep them exactly in their place without weakness and without cruelty . . .'"

Americans are not immune from such inane sentiments. (Did not someone say that all ideas come to America to die?) But, in my opinion, they have struck deep root here. The American sense of mission expresses itself rather in internalised forms: the mission is to be realised within the United States and to serve as a model to others.

RICHARD PIPES

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

Douglas, Hook & The Law

SINCE the appearance of his book, *Academic Freedom and Academic Anarchy*, I have become a great admirer of Professor Sidney Hook; likewise, in time past, I have admired Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas' views on freedom of speech, and have been disturbed by his recent decline into senescent espousal of destructive student radicals. Thus, your September issue, with Professor Hook's review of Justice Douglas' *Points of Rebellion*, particularly pleased me.

Justice Douglas' book certainly demands better reviewing than the superciliousness of *National Review* or the hagiography of the liberal journals, and Professor Hook does provide it. Despite my general pleasure with his review, however, I would like to take issue with Professor Hook on one point.

Professor Hook quotes (p. 46) from the *Yates* opinion, to the point that Justice Douglas did not feel speech was punishable even when it did lead to illegal actions. Professor Hook disapproves this attitude as bordering on irresponsibility.

From another point of view, though, Justice Douglas' view does not so much endorse inflammatory rhetoric as much as it insists on individual responsibility and choice; no matter what is said to him, a time comes when the listener must decide whether to heave a brick or remain at peace. Justice Douglas would restrict the law until the brick was on the verge of being thrown; or, until it was already thrown.

The orderliness of a society demands upon the willingness of every citizen, during virtually every waking moment, to conduct himself in a civilised manner, even in the face of serious affront. Now, a person may put aside social norms under stress, but the possibility of punishment for action, presumably, will re-enforce his consciousness of norms; when punished, he is punished for his loss of self-control, for his failure to make a choice of action that favours order.

Granted that the law has a bad job of it in capturing rioters, and granted that Justice Douglas himself might now excuse much barbaric behaviour, the point remains that the *Yates* opinion may be read as an assertion of the ability to a free will, as a demand for individual responsibility, as much as hyper-tolerance of demagoguery, and that the former point deserves some notice.

DONALD B. SHARP

Carlow College,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

MR SHARP'S READING of the sentence I quoted from *Yates v. United States* would be more plausible if the key words were "lead to." But the sentence, penned by Justice Black and approved by Justice Douglas, declares that speech is constitutionally privileged even when it "incites to action, legal or illegal." "Incite" is a verb that is much stronger than "advocate." In Chapter One, "Intelligence and Human Rights", of my

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The Paradoxes of Freedom (1962), I give reasons for regarding "incitement" in a specific situation, as when we speak of the incitement of a lynch mob, as an action-word that triggers the illegal and punishable behaviour. To wait "until the brick was on the verge of being thrown or until it was already thrown" (or until the rope is already on the victim's neck or the match is being applied) is much too late.

The question of "free will" does not seem to me to be pertinent here. The person who has been incited to an act of arson or murder is not therefore absolved of responsibility—moral and legal. The relevant question is whether the person who incites the crime should also be held legally responsible, even if in lesser measure; or whether in the interest of freedom of speech his words should be held constitutionally privileged.

Common sense moral judgment has always regarded the incitement to a crime as a kind of complicity in the action. "Must I shoot a simple soldier boy who deserts," Abraham Lincoln once asked, "while I must not touch the hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert?" Actually the law in the past has made actionable even "counselling" a crime but today in many riot-torn communities it is a dead letter. And not only in such communities. It has been charged that on many campuses draft-counselling is often a counsel of draft-evasion.

Perhaps it would not be inappropriate to recall Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' remarks in *Frowerk v. United States:* 1919.

> "The First Amendment while prohibiting legislation against free speech as such cannot have been, and obviously was not, intended to give immunity for every possible use of language.... We venture to believe that neither Madison nor Hamilton nor any other competent person, then or later, ever supposed that to make criminal the counseling of a murder within the jurisdiction of Congress would be an unconstitutional interference with free speech."

SIDNEY HOOK
New York University

Arabs & Negroes

On Bernard Lewis' Article—By L. P. HARVEY

THERE IS A DANGER that Professor Bernard Lewis' admirable essay on "Race and Colour in Islam" [ENCOUNTER, August]—and also any discussion arising out of it—will be misinterpreted as a denigration of Islam in all three of the senses of that word which Professor Lewis so carefully distinguishes. He made it abundantly clear that the failings which he documents so fully were not failings present in the original pure faith, but rather failings in Islam as a system of belief as developed by later theologians, and, more particularly, failings in Islam as an actual political entity. I can only repeat that what I say is animated by the same spirit.

That Negroes have in fact been accorded unequal treatment within Islam is a fact now fully documented by Professor Lewis. Many of the sources for this information, although well-known to the specialist, are (as ENCOUNTER suggests, in its note on p. 35) not easily accessible to an English-speaking reader. Yet quite enough information was easily available in translations from the Arabic classics (even from the *Thousand and One Nights* from which Professor Lewis quotes so effectively) and from the publications of bodies concerned with the abolition of slavery. So many Western liberal thinkers did not find evidence of prejudice because they did not want to find that evidence. It was, I think, a sound editorial decision on the part of ENCOUNTER to rub unwilling noses in the full bibliographical references.

"Race and Colour" concludes by examining the important question of why and how a myth of absolute Muslim Innocence (the counterpart of absolute Western Guilt) came to be propagated in our time. Professor Lewis may well be correct in seeing the West's insistence on apportioning to itself a special share of guilt as being due to "nostalgia for the white man's burden", and to a variety of inverted arrogance. One can understand the propagation of the myth a little better if one bears in mind the propagation of the myth of the material and moral superiority of the Soviets.[1] The success of this myth was not in general due to Soviet propaganda—that was often highly inept. The Webbs and so many others believed and propagandised because they felt the need to believe. I suspect that in our open societies some would-be revolutionaries feel the need to identify themselves with an outside power. Where all normal forms of peaceful political activity are tolerated, the radical or the reformer feels in danger of becoming a licensed part of the system, the Establishment, or a member of Her Majesty's

[1] In drawing this parallel I do not wish to suggest that I think Islam to be an untenable religion in the way that I do think Soviet communism to be an untenable philosophy. I want merely to compare two myths about the nature of other systems which have flourished within our own.

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ABOUT THE TIME *I was asked to write this article, the Garden House trial was concluded. Like most members of the University I thought the sentences excessively severe. But as it happened, when the news of the judgement came through on the wireless I was in a pub in Essex. The whole bar went up in a roar of delight; the only regret was that the sentences were not longer. A fair cross-section of ordinary citizens, it appeared; and theirs is the state of mind with regard to university students that is now becoming general. Revolutionary students talk a good deal about democracy; if the methods of full participatory democracy were applied to them their careers would be very short. Those who attempted a demonstration in the Cambridge market-place after the trial probably realise this now. The peaceful demonstrators who assembled outside the Guildhall on Saturday, July 4th, to protest the severity of the sentences were taunted and pelted with fruit and vegetables by members of the town.*

As usual, the noisy and violent minority is taken to represent the whole, and the reputation of the universities is very low. This is partly their own fault—they have given at least the appearance of condoning intolerable disorders; and it is partly the work of the professional myth-makers of the newspapers. The myth of wholesale student revolution has been one of their great standbys in recent times. Like most myths it has genuine psychological roots, and in the end it creates real situations to correspond with its intentions. The important question is about intentionality rather than origins. Myths flourish because people intend something by them; they are believed because people want them to be true. On the face of it, it seems no good to anyone that the higher educational system should fall into chaos. Yet it is evident that there are people, some of them in positions of influence, who want the myth of general student revolution to be true. Let us consider who they are. This will mean treading on the toes of a few sacred cows; but we shall find they do not belong to any one party or age-group.

FIRST, OBVIOUSLY, *there is the New Left. It is part of their doctrine that parliamentary politics are useless, that universities are a specially suitable field for revolutionary activity, and that students have a special part to play. They are not very numerous, but they are concentrated in the universities. Almost powerless on the national scene they quite logically want to operate in a vulnerable area conveniently on their own doorstep. They include both dons and students. My impression is that most of the students are not too eager to import their politics into their university life, and that most of the dons pretend not to do this but really do so, vicariously. They have a heavy responsibility to bear. Everyone has a right to his political convictions; but those whose convictions include the duty of "smashing the system" of the institutions to which they belong are bound to find their whole position called in question.*

On the other hand we have the Old Right, who are eager for any chance to clobber the young and to group all their political opponents under one disreputable banner. There are now few of them left, and very few in the universities. Indeed the only perfectly preserved specimen I have met lately was a retired Indian Army colonel who lived in Spain. A nice chap, but modern England had long been too much for him.

We then enter the realm of psychopathology rather than politics. There are the exponents of the Peter Pan syndrome (dons): formerly young men of brilliant promise, they have suddenly realised that they are past forty, and they clutch desperately at their lost youth by a neurotic identification with their more conspicuous juniors. A sadder, older group (also dons) are sufferers from the melancholia of middle age, sick of their own way of life and unconsciously willing its destruction. They live in an atmosphere of muted apocalypse and are apt to believe that it is only their wise concessions that have averted untold disasters. Like the ladies of the beleaguered city, "When does the rape begin?" they cry. It makes them feel wanted. . . . And last there is a miscellaneous rag-tag (mostly students) who will join anything for excitement and publicity.

IT IS A CURIOUS GROUPING, *but they all have their reasons for willing the continuance of the myth. There are not really very many of them, but because of their diversity they have footholds in many places. Fascist movements in the earlier part of the century exhibit similar patterns. The only people not represented are the great mass of students. At a time when some rather minor disturbances in Cambridge were causing anxiety, all those colleagues whom I spoke to reported that their relations with their supervision pupils were as good as ever. Even in a notoriously non-lecture-minded faculty like my own, attendance at lectures has on the whole improved. The tripos papers I marked last year were entirely normal in quality and content. (The tripos, I may add, has been markedly reformed, by an initiative of the Faculty Board, taken before "participation" was thought of.) The university drama flourishes as usual. Clubs and societies are active in*

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. . . English Dons and the Peter Pan Syndrome

their usual way. In all those areas that make up most of university life, intellectual and social, things are following their normal evolutionary course, without any marked breaches of continuity. The natural deduction from this is that students as a whole are not in the least in a revolutionary state of mind. In fact they are pursuing the normal proper activities of students in a perfectly normal way. I am talking about England and about Cambridge in particular. In a country torn by fundamental political conflict, like the U.S., or in cases where the university system is dangerously obsolete, as in some European countries, the situation is very different; and for good reason. But there are no good reasons for importing into our domestic disagreements a violence and bitterness that is wholly unwarranted by the objective situation.

Yet all the useful and agreeable activity of English university life (as useful and a good deal more agreeable than that of universities in any other country I know) is obscured in the public mind by examples of violence and disruption. And in other universities, though not to any great extent here, it has been actually swamped by outbreaks of mass hysteria like that about the non-existent political files. The views of the liberal establishment, which now apparently represent academic orthodoxy, are quite inadequate to the situation. They are, roughly, that with more "participation" all will be well; and they are being energetically propagated at the end of a year when they have been attended with a conspicuous lack of success. It is the universities that have had most participation that have had most continuous disorder.

NO SITUATION *is helped by cant, and there is too much cant about student participation in university government. Most students are bored by the whole business. They have other interests. Of course there are matters in which students rightly expect to have a say, and others in which they can reasonably expect to be consulted. But academically a university is controlled by the continuing responsibility of its permanent senior members, not by the fluctuating tastes of students, most of whom will never set foot in a university again after their three undergraduate years are over. When students put a case, their seniors it is to be hoped will often be able to say yes to it. But they have the right and will sometimes have the duty to say no; and they will cause less trouble and offence by saying no plainly than by timid and lengthy evasions. A seat of learning must give priority to professional achievement and experience. Those who want a mass youth-culture can look for it elsewhere. It is not hard to find. . . .*

UNIVERSITIES *are extremely vulnerable institutions, since they have always relied on government by consent, without the power of physical coercion. And punishment is no function of a university society. But there is one power that it must retain—the power to get rid of those who try to obstruct or break it up from within. And it must, I am afraid, be ready to use it. Edwardian sentiment about "sending down"—social ostracism, broken careers, etc.—is quite unreal today. Conspicuous delinquency is no barrier to fame and fortune. It is quite possible to make one's way in the world without a university education, and those who will not keep to a university code must be told to go elsewhere. It is for the University, as a corporate body, to take this responsibility. Colleges have their domestic jurisdiction, but most of the disorders that have caused trouble recently are not college matters. There are cases where only the University has the moral authority to act. If it has not the juridical authority it had better set about acquiring it without delay.*

REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS *have attained the insight that universities are the organs of existing society. Of course they are. What else could they be? But for the last hundred years or more, they have claimed and exercised the right to criticise and to try to alter that society —by the means proper to a university: intellectual activity and persuasion. If the universities abandon those means, the right will soon be denied them, as it is in many countries of the world. Nobody should expect a university to be a society without conflict, but if it is to continue to exist, it must be able to contain its conflicts within its own accepted forms. There is a large majority both of seniors and juniors who are sick of the dreary hypocrisy of those students who want to shelter behind their privileged status and at the same time destroy the life and reputation of the very institution that guarantees it. There is a large majority that want Cambridge to go on being the fair, rational and considerate place that it has mostly been for a great many years. Such people are apt to live as individuals and not to think of themselves collectively. It seems likely that they will have to make some change in their habits, both seniors and juniors, and find a way of making their collective influence felt, if they are to preserve a kind of life that they think worth having.*

GRAHAM HOUGH "*The Myth of Student Revolt*"
in GRANTA (Cambridge).

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loyal Opposition. Outside allegiances, however absurd (in many ways the more absurd the better, *e.g.* our anarchist sympathisers with Maoism), serve to maintain the integrity of dissent. "If Muslims can treat Negroes properly, why can't we?"—this is an underlying theme.

It took much more than scholarly analyses of the nature of the Soviet system to make the Soviet myth untenable. (The Berlin rising of 1953, Budapest, Prague—we seem to need a holocaust every two or three years to remind us.) It will take more than an article in ENCOUNTER to affect, say, Black Muslim recruiting. Objectively the differences between the record of the Islamic World and our own in matters of race may be small, but this myth by now has taken such firm root that, for example, men called Clay or De Freitas feel liberated from their past by the adoption of Islamic names, even though it is only in Islamic lands that black slavery still subsists.

PROFESSOR LEWIS has drawn attention to the close parallels in attitude sometimes to be detected between Islamic society and our own: Caliphs behaving like Southern gentlemen, for example. I had quite independently felt this on several occasions when reading Arabic texts. When I came across the following story in a work of popular devotion by Abu-l-Laith Nasr ibn Muhammad as-Samarqandi entitled *Summons to the Heedless*[2] I found myself thinking that with very little adaptation it sould serve as a plot-outline for one of those well-meaning soft-centred films which Hollywood now turns out from time to time on racial problems.

The story takes the form of a tradition (*hadith*) purporting to go back to the time of the Prophet himself. However, it is told on the authority of a witness called Anas, of whom Wensinck says that "his reputation as a traditionist is none of the highest," so we must not be too impressed. I quote the story *not* to illustrate Muhammad's own attitudes, but those of popular Islam in the Middle Ages and subsequently.

> A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Prophet, does my blackness, and the ugliness of my face ban me from entry into paradise?"
>
> "No" he replied. "Well, by Him who holds my soul in His hand, I had believed in the message of God's messenger, and had borne witness that there is no god but Allah, eight months before I joined this assembly. I have already asked everyone, present and absent, for the hand of one of their daughters in marriage. And they have all rejected me because of my black complexion and ugly face. Now in my tribe I am noble, but in my case the dark complexion of my mother's family has predominated."
>
> The Prophet then said, "Has Omar ibn Wahb borne witness today?" (This was a man of Thaqif, but lately entered into a treaty with Islam.) All present said "No."
>
> So the Prophet said, "Do you know his house?" "Yes."
>
> "Go then, knock gently on his door, give him greeting, and when you are inside, say 'As my wife the Prophet has given me your daughter'." (This man had a free-born daughter who was extremely beautiful and extremely wise.)
>
> When the man of black complexion reached the door, knocked and gave his greeting, they heard the voice of a stranger and opened the door, but when they saw how black and ugly he was, they shrank back. "As my wife the Prophet has given me your daughter", he said, but they drove him off in ugly fashion. . . .

The story is too long to give in full detail. The daughter it is, who (in true Hollywood fashion) persuades her father to accept the Prophet's ruling. (It is left somewhat ambiguous whether this is out of desire to fulfil religious obligations or to avoid hostile gossip.) The father goes to see Muhammad:

> The Prophet asked him: "Were you the one who rejected the Prophet?"
>
> "I did, and I take refuge in God's mercy for it. I thought that this man must be lying in what he said. If he were telling the truth, my daughter is his, and I seek refuge in Allah from the wrath of Allah."

When they come to set the bride-price (400 dirhems) the man is about to go back home to raise it from his brothers when the Prophet offers to have it provided by three prominent members of the community, amongst them the much-revered Ali. But as the man was going along with the money, he heard the muezzin call. Looking up to heaven, he determined to spend the money in the service of Allah. He bought himself a horse and weapons and rode out to fight the enemies of the Faith. After fighting bravely he is killed, and as he died, he was tended by the Prophet himself, who wiped the dust of battle from his face with his clothes. Muhammad saw him go to Heaven, to be greeted by the houris of Paradise.

The story ends on a note of remarkable vindictiveness. They bear him to his bride and tell her:

> "Allah has already married him to a better maid than any of yours."

A cynical reader may note that this synopsis could have been drafted while Hollywood was still operating its strict censorship code. We are spared completely the embarrassment of a mixed bedroom scene. The moral principle of equality in the sight of God is asserted without any disturbing physical contact to worry the audience.

But again, as in Bernard Lewis' account, there is the historic distance between noble moral precept and social reality.

L. P. HARVEY

PROFESSOR BERNARD LEWIS' "Race & Colour in Islam" [ENCOUNTER, August] smells white. At the end of his "Anthology of Anti-Negro Feeling in

[2] *Tanbih al-ghafilin*, compiled in the 10th century A.D.; I quote from a modern Cairo printing, A. H. 1306, pp. 205 *et ss.*

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Islamic Literature", Mr Lewis frankly states his purpose, *viz.*, "to point to certain common failings of our common humanity." We are all racists, so who shall point the finger!

I will point the finger, generally and in specifics. Who could imagine any sane person in 1970 trying to prove that there is racism—and has been—in the U.S., U.K., and France? It would be like a demonstration that rain falls downward! The very existence of Mr Lewis' piece suggests the significant difference between Islam and the West; the insistence on "common failings" seems strange.

Example: Mr Lewis comments that some missionaries believed blacks preferred Islam to Christianity because converts to the latter achieved immediate equality. He criticises such missionaries because, he says, they "make the illogical assumption that reprobation of prejudice in a society proves its absence. In fact, of course, it reveals its presence."

Score one for Mr Lewis? Not quite. Is Mr Lewis seriously trying to convince us that a state which legally sanctifies racism—as much of Europe and the U.S.—is the same as a state which legally condemns it? If Islamic sanctions against racism prove its existence, then what are we to say of laws institutionalising racism? As immigration quotas, for example. One does not need to memorize Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Al-Masalik wa'l-mamalik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum*, vi (Leiden, 1899) to suspect Mr Lewis' desired conclusion (*viz.*, nobody's ever liked the blacks so don't blame us). Is it not a bit odd that a leading scholar should just at this time become so anxious to "discredit the myth" of "Muslim freedom from racial prejudice"?

Even with his careful selections and strained commentaries, Mr Lewis' materials suggest that the differences in degree of anti-black feeling in Islam and in the West are important enough to be worth an investigation that Mr Lewis implies is not needed.

Instead of piously speaking about "common failings" let us speak of our own.

LUTHER J. LINK

Aoyama University,
Tokyo, Japan

Bernard Lewis' Reply

PROFESSOR HUNWICK [ENCOUNTER, January], is of course quite right in saying that there are Muslim Arab authors who write about black Africans without racial prejudice. One might even go further and point, as I did in the article, to Muslims who explicitly reject and denounce such prejudice. This would effectively refute the view that all Arabs or all Muslims were prejudiced. No such view was, however, expressed or discussed. The question at issue was not the universality but the existence of prejudice; and my purpose was to correct the common but erroneous view that prejudice did not exist at all. *Pace* Mr Link, the correction of error—even of politically useful and emotionally satisfying error—is a legitimate task of the historian.

Professor Hunwick and I agree in seeing the appearance of colour prejudice as an aspect of the natural feeling of superiority of the Arabs in the Empire and civilisation which they had founded. In time, as Professor Hunwick points out, this feeling ceased to matter (except, be it noted in passing, in the laws relating to marriage). But while the distinction between Arab and non-Arab faded, the more visible distinction between white, brown, and black did not. Several of the authors cited in the article—*e.g.* Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406)—belong to later periods. It would be easy to add others. Thus the Moroccan al-Idrisi (d. 1165), by common consent the greatest Muslim geographer of the Middle Ages, concluding his long and detailed account of the black zone with some general observations, repeats the old clichés about stinking sweat and the rest, and ascribes "lack of knowledge and defective minds" to the dark-skinned peoples. Their ignorance, he says, is notorious; men of learning and distinction are almost unknown among them, and their kings only acquire what they know about government from the instruction of learned visitors from further north. There is ample evidence of discrimination as well as prejudice, in later as well as in earlier times. Thus for example Edward Lane, whom I am sure Professor Hunwick would recognise as a careful and accurate observer, noted the colour distinction among slaves in Egypt in 1833-5, with the whites at the top, the brown Ethiopians in the middle, and the blacks at the bottom, "generally employed as menials." By this time white eunuchs—always a minority—had become very rare, while black eunuchs were still being "manufactured" in hundreds every year.

THIS BRINGS ME TO my final point—the comparison between Islam and the West. Re-reading what I wrote, I find that the desire for brevity—understandable if not excusable on the 17th page of a magazine article—has led to ambiguity and possible misunderstanding. Professor Hunwick has very courteously drawn attention to the worse interpretation without actually imputing it to me, and for this I thank him. As he says, to disclaim a purpose implies that it is possible. What I tried—not very lucidly—to disclaim was two comparisons: between castration and *apartheid* as offences against humanity, and between the Muslim and Western records in the enslavement and suppression of the black African. These are of course two quite different issues, but each of them, it seems to me, involves terms which are genuinely comparable.

Professor Hunwick has raised questions of scholarship, which I have tried to answer in the same spirit. I find it difficult to do the same for Mr Link. While apparently opposed to racialism, Mr Link can smell the colour of an article, judges its content and purport by what he smells, and communicates his findings in the same way. By this method, he sniffs out sentiments and purposes

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which are both foreign and repellent to me, but which it would be useless to argue on this level. I shall therefore limit myself to Mr Link's occasional references to matters of fact.

Mr Link invites us to compare "much of Europe and the U.S.", which, he says, "legally sanctifies racism," with Islam which, he says, "legally condemns it" and even provides "sanctions" against it. The truth is almost the exact opposite. In discussing the "reprobation of prejudice" in Islam, I spoke of pious precept, not of law. In fact, the law neither condones nor condemns racialism, and provides no sanctions against it. The only point at which the law explicitly deals with race at all is on the question of marriage, and here it sanctifies the principle of inequality. Mr Link is equally wrong about Europe and the U.S. It is Germany that has now outlawed anti-semitism, Britain and the U.S. that have adopted legislation against racial discrimination and incitement. Would Mr Link still deny that the reprobation of prejudice in a society reveals its presence?

In his only specific charge, Mr Link speaks of my "careful selections and strained commentaries." "Careful" is obviously a term of abuse in Mr Link's vocabulary, as "strained" is in mine. If he will explain his meaning more fully, I shall endeavour to answer him. In the meantime I must express my thanks to him for exemplifying so vividly some of the factors which determine the growth and spread of myths.

BERNARD LEWIS

London

To the Readers of ENCOUNTER

SINCE OUR EMERGENCY APPEAL for subscriptions, printed in the last *Encounter* (January, p. 2), many readers have inquired whether the straight donation of a sum of money would be appropriate. This was not, of course, the point of the drive; our best capital is an expanded readership. However, it would be possible to use any financial contributions received in order to give *Encounter* subscriptions to those many persons and institutions—students, libraries, research groups, newspaper editors, especially in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe—who write us about the financial hardship of taking out (or renewing) their subscriptions to *Encounter*. All donations will, therefore, be used for this purpose.

The Editors

AUTHORS

Malcolm Bradbury is Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia. *The Social Context of English Literature*, of which his present article forms a part, will be published this spring by Blackwell....

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Christopher Driver is a free-lance writer and journalist. Hodder & Stoughton will publish his *The Exploding Universe* in the summer....

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I. M. Lewis is Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics; following the publication of books on Africa and Islam, he edited *History and Social Anthropology* (Tavistock, 1968), and contributed to *Witchcraft: Confessions and Accusations. Ecstatic Religion* will be published by Penguin in April....

R. Prawer Jhabvala lives in New Delhi. Polish-born, but Indian by marriage and adoption, she is the author of several novels and volumes of short stories, including *Like Birds, Like Fishes* (1963) and *A Stronger Climate* (1968) (John Murray)....

Paul Theroux, born in America, is a Lecturer in English at the University of Singapore, having previously taught in Nyasaland and Uganda. He has published two novels (*Waldo*, 1968, and *Girls at Play*, 1969); his next book, *Jungle Lovers* (also to be published by The Bodley Head), will appear this year....

earle birney, born in Calgary in 1904, is Writer-in-Residence at the University of Toronto. He has travelled widely, teaching at various universities. His publications include volumes of drama, satire and criticism, and he has edited *Canadian Forum* and *Canadian Poetry*. His own volumes of poems include *David and Other Poems, Now is Time, Ice Cod Bell or Stone, Memory No Servant*, and *The Poems of Earle Birney*....

THE ILLUSTRATIONS to Christopher Driver's articles were by **Flora.**

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Life & Letters Today

London

THE DEAR, SWEET *"Sunday Times" has been caught in the language game. This week's issue, regrettably not available to all its readers (because of a London strike), included a letter about George Mikes's expulsion with a BBC camera crew from Hungary.*

It taunted Mikes for not knowing the present-day ropes in his former country, and produced a photograph to prove that you could get away with snapping forbidden road signs if only you did know them. "I speak Hungarian as fluently as Mikes Gyorgy and am not a fellow traveller either, just a cynic and more of a rope dancer than he is."

Quite, and that ought perhaps to have been a warning to the letters editor. The elaborate Magyar signature, says our resident Hungarian scout, is "very rude." It records with explicit relish how and what the writer did to "that whore Maria." And the address in Austria translates "Stinkhouse."

THE GUARDIAN

London

IS NOT *"sanctions", when what is meant is "blockade", the worst example of the total misuse of an English word at the present time?*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York City

ALL TOGETHER NOW: *In their desire to be "with it", advertising men often strain to take over the latest "in" words. Not long ago, dozens of products and services were promoted as being the consumer's "bag." Later the public was assured that by using any one of perhaps a score of products, a purchaser was "doing your own thing." After that, countless products were said to be "now" or "out of sight." Trouble is, such ads quickly become painfully repetitious. They seem fatuous and contrived to the people who understand the catchwords, hopelessly confusing to those who do not. And today's argot changes so quickly that by the time a catch line shows up in ads, it has often become as outdated and square as, well, the word square itself.*

Lately, admen have discovered a new old phrase with which to belabor the public: "Getting it all together." The line is said to be derived from the vocabulary of football coaches and orchestra conductors ("Now let's get it all together, fellas"). It was popularized several years ago when—as is the case with so many catch phrases—it was picked up by the blacks and then the young. At least seven advertising campaigns have been riding on the familiar theme.

TIME

Jerusalem

WHAT'S *in a word? Quite a lot, thinks Menahem Begin, who withdrew from the Israeli coalition in protest against acceptance of the American peace plan.*

The Rogers proposals, he pointed out, in the Knesset, called for "acknowledgment" of Israel's sovereignty, not recognition. President Nasser might acknowledge Israel's sovereignty but he would never recognise it, he told Golda Meir.

Mrs. Meir promptly called for an English dictionary in an attempt to convince Begin that to acknowledge can be defined as to "recognise the authority or claims of: recognise in legal form."

It is not known whether Begin was convinced by the semantics. Nor does anyone seem to have considered how many differing interpretations of "acknowledge" and "recognise" there are in Arabic.

THE TIMES

Bologna

A BOLOGNA COURT *declared obscene today a volume of poems by French writer Paul Verlaine. It sentenced the publisher, Donatella Conciliani of San Pietro, to five months' imprisonment, and imposed a fine of $130. The sentence was suspended. The volume is called "Uomini e Donne" (Men and Women).*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris

PIERRE VIANSSON-PONTE, *political editor of "Le Monde", offers in a book called "La France Gaullienne" this remark by Gen. de Gaulle on Russian leaders: "Stalin, that's Dostoevski; Khrushchev, that's Gogol. You scratch a little and you think you'll find Marx and Lenin. But, no! You discover Gogol and Taras Bulba."*

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Athens

THE GREEK GOVERNMENT *has abolished its list of banned books and has told book-stores they are free to sell all volumes "so long as they do not contain propaganda against the established constitutional order".*

The circular, sent to the Greek association of publishers and booksellers, left the trade perplexed about what could and could not be sold. One bookseller said: "There is no one I can turn to and ask whether a book is or is not propaganda".

After the military takeover of April 21, 1967, the regime issued a 60-page list of some 850 banned books. The works of foreign Communist writers from Karl Marx to Fidel Castro were on the list, as were the works, political or not, of all Greek authors considered Communists.

NEW YORK TIMES

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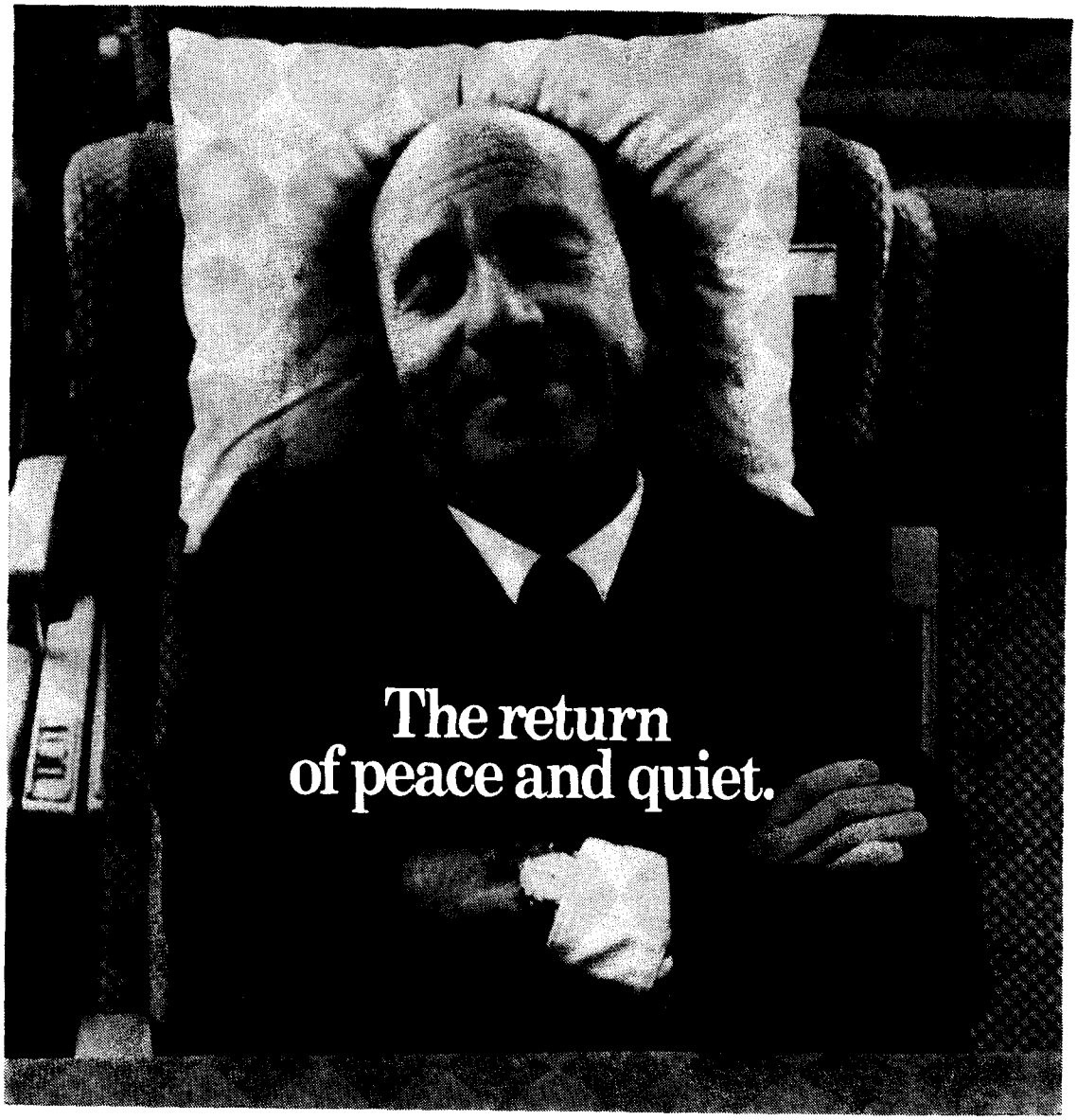

This winter, there may be fewer Jets going back and forth across the Atlantic. But there'll be even fewer people. With more room to stretch out legs in. More room to spread out papers in. More room to sort out details in. Both in First Class and Economy Class. On both Pan Am 707s and Pan Am 747s. And there's less congestion in the terminals and less traffic on the roads on the way. So book yourself on a Pan Am Jet. For a little peace and quiet. Going and returning.

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